THE

CHILDRENS BIBLE:

OR, AN

HISTORY of the *Holy Scriptures.*

In which the ſeveral Paſſages of the Old and New Teſtament are laid down in a Method never before attempted; being reduced to the tender Capacities of the little Readers, by a lively and ſtriking Abſtract, ſo as, under GOD, to make thoſe excellent Books take ſuch a firm Hold of their young Minds and Memories, and leave ſuch Impreſſions there, both of Moral and Religious Virtue, as no Accidents of their future Lives will ever be able to blot out.

To which are added,

The PRINCIPLES of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION,

Adapted to the MINDS of CHILDREN.

By a DIVINE of the Church of ENGLAND.

Adorned with COPPER and METAL CUTS.

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The Childrens Bible.

CHAPTER I.

1. *God makes the world.* 2. *Man disobeys God's commands, and is turned out of Paradise;* 3. *Abel is killed by his wicked brother Cain.* 4. *God drowns all mankind in the Flood, on account of their wicked and perverse tempers, excepting* Noah *and his family who are preserved in the ark.*

1. IT is now almoſt ſix thouſand years ſince GOD ALMIGHTY, of his great goodneſs, was pleaſed to create this world out of nothing; nor did he make

uſe of any other power for that purpoſe beſides his bare word; and after he had, in five days, made the earth, and the ſun, and the moon, and the ſtars; every fiſh in the ſea, and every bird in the air; and every beaſt and creeping thing which moves upon the face of the earth, on the ſixth day he reſolved to make man, which he did accordingly, out of the common duſt. And he ſaid I will make him in my own image! but we are not to imagine, for that reaſon, that GOD is like a man, for he is a ſpirit, and has neither body, parts, nor paſſions. But GOD breathed into the man's noſtrils the breath of life, thereby making him like himſelf, that is to ſay, immortal. And this was our firſt parent *Adam*. But GOD's goodneſs did not reſt here, for fearing leſt his new formed creature ſhould grow melancholy for want of a companion, and with an intent, as we may ſuppoſe, to continue his kind upon earth, he caſt *Adam* afterwards into a deep ſleep, and taking a rib from his ſide, he out of it formed a woman. By this action figuring the near and intimate relation between huſband and wife. And *Adam* received her from GOD and called her name *Eve*. And from thoſe two are deſcended all the men and women that have ſince lived in the world.

GODALMIGHTY having thus finiſhed the great work of the creation, on the ſeventh day from which he begun it, he reſted, and this the *Jews* called the *ſab-*

Sabbath, which by GOD's command they ever after keep holy, abſtaining from all work upon it. And it is in imitation of this that we keep Sunday.

But ſuch was the infinite love of GOD, that he never thought he could do enough for man. So he took *Adam* and his wife, and placed them in a beautiful garden called *Paradiſe*; telling them, at the ſame time, that he made them a preſent of every thing they ſaw, which they might freely command, and make what uſe they pleaſed of, only, ſaid he, of one particular fruit, which grows on a tree, in the middle of the garden, you ſhall not eat. Nay, he told them, if they taſted it they ſhould certainly die.

2. However, this was not ſufficient to prevent the woman from being tempted by the devil, in the ſhape of the ſerpent, to break GOD's command; and not only ſo, but ſhe brought ſome of the fruit to her huſband, who was weak enough to taſte it too. Now this apple, for ſo it is called in the Holy Scriptures, had ſome particular quality belonging to it, by which means the perſons who eat it, immediately became to have the knowledge of good and evil. Our firſt parents, therefore were no longer innocent, but when GOD came into the garden to them, kept out of his ſight, for ſhame, becauſe they were naked. This aſſured GOD ALMIGHTY immediately of what they had done. And calling

to them he told them of his ſuſpicions.

The man confeſſed his crime, but laid the fault on the woman; and ſhe in her turn accuſed the ſerpent. However, GOD was ſo incenſed, that he turned them directly out of *Paradiſe*, intailing death and numberleſs miſeries upon them and their poſterity.

Obſerve, now my dear little reader, how eaſy a command our firſt parents broke, which GOD impoſed upon them, meerly to try their obedience. And, ſuch is our crime, when to ſatisfy any of our own idle appetites and deſires, we go againſt his holy will and pleaſure. But our puniſhment will be much greater, ſince we ſhall ſhut ourſelves out thereby, from a thouſand times a more glorious *paradiſe* than that they loſt, even from Heaven itſelf, when thoſe who hear GOD's word and keep it, ſhall live and be happy to all eternity.

But to return to our firſt parents; having ruined themſelves in the manner which is related above, in proceſs of time they had two ſons, the eldeſt of which, named *Cain*, was a gardener, and the youngeſt, called *Abel*, was a ſhepherd. Now *Cain* was of a proud ſtubborn ſpirit, ſo that when he came to offer part of his fruits to GOD ALMIGHTY, he found by ſome token or other that they were rejected. But on the contrary, when *Abel*, who was a good mild youth, came to ſacrifice one of his flock, GOD condeſcended to accept it, thereby ſhewing

ing a particular mark of favour to him, as he had before shewn a particular sign of dislike to his brother.

3. Now this vexed the wicked *Cain*, and raised his envy: wherefore, making a pretence shortly after to walk with poor *Abel* in the fields, he watched his opportunity, and when he thought nobody was near, murdered him: thus, committing the most horrid of all crimes, in the most horrid degree, even upon his own brother whom instead of depriving of life it was his duty to have defended with the hazard of his own.

But we are much mistaken when we do a bad action in private, if for that reason we imagine nobody sees us, for GOD is present every where, and it would be better for us, that it should be published to all the world, so it might be kept a secret from him, but that is impossible; and he quickly convinced *Cain* that he had not committed his crime without a witness. When driving him out of society, he fixed a frightful mark upon him, which made all people run away from, and avoid, him. Let every one, therefore, love their brothers and sisters, and if they see them more caressed than themselves, be sure that it is because they are better, and not for that reason grow cross, or ill-tempered, but strive to be as good as they, unless they have a mind to draw upon themselves the same punishment which GOD inflicted on *Cain*.

4. Thus, my dear child, you have seen the dreadful

conſequences of vice in particular perſons; but the world ſoon grew ſo intolerably wicked, that GOD ALMIGHY could endure it no longer, and he reſolved to deſtroy it all at once. However, as he never puniſhes the innocent with the guilty, there was one *Noah*, who was a pious and virtuous man, and him GOD ALMIGHTY determined to ſave, together with his whole family. And *Noah*, by the commands of GOD, made a great ſhip, which we know by the name of the *Ark*. And, into this ſhip he went with his wife, and his ſons, and his daughters, taking a certain number of every living creature along with him; and he was no ſooner out of danger, than GOD cauſed it to rain for forty days ſucceſſively, and the ſea, and the rivers, at the ſame time over-flowing, the whole earth was covered with water a conſiderable deal above the higheſt mountains. And all the wicked inhabitants of it were utterly deſtroyed.

Nor did the waters begin to abate in leſs than ſeven months, when a ſtrong wind blowing from Heaven the *Ark* reſted upon a mountain, and *Noah*, in order to try whether the earth was quite dry or not, let fly a little dove, which immediately returned to him again, being able to find no place of reſt. But ſending the ſame dove out again, in a ſhort time after, ſhe preſently came back with an olive-branch in her bill; thereby, letting *Noah* underſtand that the flood was gone back. So *Noah* with all his family came

came out of the *Ark*, thanking and praising GOD, and all the birds and beasts came out with him.

CHAP. II.

1. *God's covenant with Noah.* 2. *The building of the tower of Babel.* 3. *The birth, marriage, and going down of Abraham into Egypt, with the evil consequences of his telling king Pharaoh a lye.* 4. *The birth of Ishmael.* 5. *The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.* 6. *The birth of Isaac.* 7. *The death of Sarah, Abraham's wife.*

1. NOW *Noah* being come out of the *ark*, with all his family, and the multitude of creature, which were there with him GOD ALMIGHTY spoke

to him, and aſſured him, that mankind ſhould never be deſtroyed in the ſame manner again. And he told him, moreover, that he had ſet his *bow* in the Heavens (that circle of beautiful colours which we frequently ſee before and after a ſhower, and call a rain-bow) which ſhould be as a covenant between GOD and *Man*. And by the immediate bleſſing of our Glorious Maker, all kinds of living creatures were multiplied upon the earth exceedingly. And *Noah* being a very old man at laſt died, leaving three ſons behind him, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*.

2. But the world no ſooner was peopled again, than they began to follow their former wickedneſs. Tho' what they attempted to do, ſoon after this, was rather an inſtance of their great folly. All mankind lived about the ſame parts of the country, and they ſpoke but one language; ſo they determined among themſelves to build a city, and at the ſame time a tower, which ſhould reach up to Heaven; but GOD ALMIGHTY pitying their weakneſs, would not inflict any puniſhment upon them: only, coming down, he made them all ſpeak different tongues, ſo that they were obliged to deſiſt from their vain undertaking, for when one aſked for a brick, the perſon whom he ſpoke to, not underſtanding him, brought ſome mortar. Upon this the people diſperſed themſelves into all parts of the earth, forming different nations. And from this the name of the tower was called *Babel*, which

which, in the Hebrew language, ſignifies *confuſion*.

3. Some time after this, there was a man named *Terah* who had three ſons, *Abram*, *Nahor*, and *Haran*. And *Abram* and *Haron* took wives, and the name of *Abram*'s wife was *Sarai*, and that of *Haran*'s was *Milcha*. And GOD loved *Abram* becauſe he was a good man, and he promiſed that he would make him the father of a great people, and that all the nations in the world ſhould be bleſſed in him; that is, that our bleſſed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST ſhould be born of a woman, deſcended from his family, which was afterwards fulfilled accordingly.

And *Abram*, in obedience to the commands of GOD, took his wife, and *Lot* his nephew, and all his houſehold, and went down into *Egypt*, on account of a famine which raged in other parts of the country. Now *Sarai* was very handſome, and *Abram* was afraid, if he owned ſhe was his wife, that the *Egyptians* would kill him, in order to get her into their poſſeſſion. He, therefore, determined to ſay that ſhe was his ſiſter. But mark the bad effects which always attend lying. Some of the *Egyptian* lords ſeeing her, told *Pharaoh* the king of her great beauty, upon which he immediately ordered, that ſhe ſhould be taken from her brother (as he thought) and brought into his palace. However, GOD was diſpleaſed to ſee his ſervant's wife raviſhed from him in that manner, ſo he ſent great plagues among *Pharaoh* and all his people.

people. And the cauſe of his anger at laſt being diſcovered, the king chid *Abram* ſeverely for deceiving him, and reſtoring *Sarai* back again, deſired that he would immediately leave his dominions.

But by this time, both *Abram* and *Lot* had increaſed to that degree in the number of their family and their cattle, that no country was ſufficient to contain and provide for them together. Beſides, their people could not agree, ſo they reſolved to part company; and *Abram* ſtayed in the land of *Canaan*, while *Lot* went to ſettle in the plains about *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*.

4. And *Abram* was deeply afflicted becauſe *Sarai* his wife brought him no children. And notwithſtanding that GOD ALMIGHTY promiſed him he ſhould have a ſon, his wife could not have patience; but in the mean time deſired that he would take a maid of her's called *Hagar*, who might poſſibly bring him iſſue. And this being a common cuſtom in thoſe early times, *Abram* complied with her requeſt, and *Hagar* accordingly grew with child. But ſhe no ſooner perceived it, than ſhe began to treat her miſtreſs *Sarai* with contempt; and *Abram* telling his wife, who had complained to him of *Hagar*'s inſolence, that her ſervant was in her hands, and ſhe might treat her as ſhe pleaſed; *Sarai* in her turn began to behave over *Hagar* with great ſeverity. And the maid ran away from her, wandering in the wilderneſs; 'till at laſt ſhe

ſat

ſat down near a wall, where an angel from Heaven calling on her, bid her be of comfort, for that ſhe was with child of a boy, who ſhould grow in time to be of great might and terror. And he deſired ſhe would go back to her miſtreſs. So *Hagar* returned home again, and ſhortly after was brought to bed of a boy, and called his name *Iſhmael*.

And about this time GOD was pleaſed to appoint the mark of circumciſion, and *Abram* and all his people were circumciſed. And GOD, at the ſame time, ordered *Abram* to change his name into that of *Abraham*, and *Sarai* her's into that of *Sarah*. And GOD renewed his former promiſes.

5. Now the people of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were the wickedeſt upon the face of the earth. And GOD ſent down his *angels* to deſtroy them, root and branch. And they appeared to *Abraham* as he ſat at his tent door, in the likeneſs of three young men. And after they had eat and drank, they roſe up and told him what was their errand; but *Abraham*, who had his nephew *Lot*, and ſeveral other relations in and about thoſe places, moſt humbly beſought the angels to take pity upon them, and at laſt they were ſo condeſcending, on *Abraham*'s intreaty, to promiſe that if there were only ten good people among them, that the cities ſhould not be deſtroyed. So the *angels* went on their way, and about evening they came to *Lot*'s houſe, in *Sodom*, into which they entered; but the wicked inhabitants

ſeeing

ſeeing them, gathered about the door, and called to *Lot* to ſend the young men out to them. However, the angels, as they grew more violent, ſtruck them every man with blindneſs. And then turning to *Lot*, they deſired him to go and gather all his ſons, and their wives, and their kindred together, whom the LORD would ſpare, on account of his regard for *Abraham*, and take them a diſtance off, for they were come to deſtroy thoſe deteſtable cities.

And *Lot* did as he was commanded, but his relations laughed at him; ſo the next morning the angels took him, and his wife, and his two daughters, and turning them out of the town, deſired them to make the beſt of their way to the mountains, for nothing could be done 'till they were got there; but, at the ſame time, gave a ſtrict charge, that none of them ſhould venture to look back. So *Lot* began his journey, and GOD rained brimſtone and fire out of Heaven, and *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, with all the adjacent cities, were burnt to the ground, with all the vile inhabitants. And *Lot*'s wife preſuming to look behind her, was turned into a pillar of ſalt.

6. And now the time of GOD's promiſe to *Abraham* being fulfilled, his wife *Sarah* became with child in her old age, and ſhe was brought to bed of a ſon, and they called his name *Iſaac*.

But when the boy was weaned, and pretty well grown up, *Sarah* one day catched *Iſhmael*, the child of

of her maid *Hagar*, mocking and jesting at him. Upon which she immediately insisted, that both he and his mother should be turned out of doors. However, *Abraham* was unwilling to do this, for he loved his son, 'till GOD telling him to comply with his wife, and that he would take care of *Ishmael*, *Hagar* was once again turned into the wilderness. And when the victuals, which she had brought out with her, were quite gone, she laid her son, who grew faint for want of water, upon the ground, and she sat herself at some distance from him, weeping bitterly. And an angel at that instant opening her eyes, she spied a well of water, and he told her at the same time that GOD was her friend. And GOD blessed them both, and *Ishmael*, when he came to age, married an *Egyptian* woman.

And *Isaac* was about thirty years old when GOD, in order to try *Abraham*'s faith, called to him, and desired him to go and sacrifice his son. And *Abraham* loved *Isaac* as if he had been himself. However, in obedience to GOD's commands, he took him, and laying wood upon an altar he set his son *Isaac* at top of it, and drawing a knife, was just going to perform the sacrifice, when an angel from Heaven desired him to hold his hand; and *Abraham*, turning about saw a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And the angel ordered him to make an offering of that instead of his son, whom GOD never designed to have hurt. However, since

Abra-

Abraham did not even with-hold what was moſt dear to him, from the deſire of the LORD, he ſwore that his ſeed ſhould be multiplied like the ſtars in Heaven.

7. And *Abraham* returned home with *Iſaac*; ſoon after which, *Sarah* his wife, being very old, died, and *Abraham* buried her in a field, which he bought of the children of *Heth*, for four hundred ſhekels of ſilver.

CHAP. III.

1. The marriage of Iſaac and Rebekah. 2. Abraham marries his ſecond wife Keturah. 3. The death of Abraham. 4. The birth of Jacob and Eſau. 5 Eſau ſells his birth-right. 6. Iſaac goes to Gerar. 7. Eſau marries two wives. 8. Jacob obtains his father's bleſſing in the place of his elder brother.

1. ABRAHAM having thus buried his wife, began now to entertain thoughts of providing one for his ſon. However, reſolving not to form any alliance with the people of the country in which he lived, he called a ſervant in whom he placed great confidence, one *Eliezer*, and firſt ſwearing him in a very ſolemn manner to obey his commands, he deſired that a handſome retinue might be got together, and that *Eliezer* would inſtantly repair to his, *Abraham*'s, native land, and bring from thence a damſel

damſel to be the wife of his ſon *Iſaac*.

And the ſervant went according to his maſter's orders, till he came near the city of *Nahor*, where *Abraham*'s relations dwelt: and *Eliezer* kneeled down by a well, and prayed to GOD that as he had now got ſafe to his journey's end; ſo if it were the will of Heaven to proſper his commiſſion, he humbly prayed that the young woman deſigned for *Iſaac*'s wife, might come to that well to draw water; and that on his deſiring the favour of a draught from her, ſhe might not only comply with his requeſt, but offer to give water to his camels alſo.

Now *Rebekah*, the daughter of *Abraham*'s nephew *Bethuel*, ſoon after came out with her father, and every thing happened according to *Eliezer*'s prayer; ſo he gave *Rebekah* a fine gold ear ring, and telling her at the ſame time, whom he belonged to. *Abraham*'s kindred quickly invited him into the city, and *Eliezer* informing them there of the buſineſs he came upon, in a ſhort time after *Rebekah* accompanied him back to his maſter, and *Iſaac* and ſhe were married.

2. After this *Abraham* married a ſecond wife called *Keturah*, by whom he had ſix ſons, and giving them ſuch a ſufficient portion, when they were come to man's eſtate, he ſent them away to ſettle in other countries, leaving all the reſt of his immenſe riches to his dear *Iſaac*.

3. And

3. And *Abraham* was one hundred and eighty five years old when he died, and his ſons, *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*, buried him in the ſame cave, in which he had before interred his beloved wife *Sarah*.

4. But notwithſtanding all *Iſaac*'s proſperity and grandeur he was not happy, becauſe *Rebekah* brought him no children. However, putting his truſt in that God, who never forſakes the juſt and virtuous, he prayed with a devout heart; when behold *Rebekah* ſuddenly conceived, and at the end of the uſual time brought him forth twins; they were boys, and the name of the elder was called *Eſau*, and the name of the younger *Jacob*.

5. When theſe children were grown up, *Eſau* ſpent his time in hunting, but *Jacob* ſtaid more at home, and was ſober and ſedate. Now it happened one day that *Eſau* returning from his ſport, was faint thro' exceſſive hunger; and ſeeing *Jacob* with a meſs of pottage before him, which he was juſt going to eat, he begged of his brother to give him ſhare of it, but *Jacob* refuſed, unleſs the other would reſign his birth-right to him: and this *Eſau* did, binding himſelf with an oath.

However, we ſhould be careful not to conſider this in the light of mortal actions: for if we do, *Jacob* was very wicked to inſiſt upon ſuch hard conditions from his brother, to whom he ſhould have given ſome of his victuals freely; but God, who cannot err, put this into his heart,

heart, in order to bring about what he had before ordained, that *Jacob* ſhould be the principal branch of his family: and GOD would at this time undoubtedly puniſh any one, who ſhould be ſo churliſh and unreaſonable.

6. And there was a famine in the land again, and *Iſaac* went with his family to a place called *Gerar*, where he ran into the very ſame error, which before had like to have occaſioned ſo much miſchief to his father *Abraham*; for fearing leſt the men of the country, if they knew that he was the huſband of *Rebekah*, who was a very beautiful woman, would kill him in order to get poſſeſſion of her, he told every body ſhe was his ſiſter. However, the evil conſequences of this falſehood were happily prevented by king *Abimelech*'s ſeeing *Iſaac* one day more familiar with *Rebekah*, than ſuch a relationſhip ſhould warrant. When chiding *Iſaac* very ſeverely for attempting to impoſe ſuch a deceit, he deſired he would leave his dominions. But after *Iſaac* was removed, *Abimelech* and his people ſought his friendſhip, and there was a league made between them to which both parties ſwore.

7. And the Holy Scripture tells us, that about this time *Eſau*, to the great grief of his parents, married two *Canaanitiſh* women (for in thoſe days men were allowed as many wives as they thought proper, for the more ſpeedy peopling of the world) and the name of one of his wives was

Judith, and the name of the other *Baſhemath*.

8. But notwithſtanding the diſpleaſure which *Iſaac* conceived againſt him on this account, we find nevertheleſs that *Eſau* was his favourite, becauſe he uſed to bring him veniſon. And being very old, and quite dim-ſighted, he called one day to his elder ſon, deſiring that he would go kill a deer, and dreſs him ſuch ſavoury meat as he knew he was fond of, becauſe he had a mind to bleſs him before he died. Now *Jacob* was the favourite of *Rebekah*, who over-hearing what her huſband had juſt ſaid to *Eſau*, the inſtant he was gone out, killed a young kid, and preparing it according to *Iſaac*'s palate ſhe gave it to her ſon *Jacob*, deſiring that he would carry it in to his father, who miſtaking him for *Eſau*, would give him the promiſed bleſſing.

But *Jacob* anſwered how ſhall I do this, ſince my brother was born with an hairy ſkin, my father will eaſily perceive the difference. So *Rebekah* made him gloves of the kid's ſkin, putting the hairy ſide outward, when *Iſaac* feeling his hands rough like *Eſau*'s, though he thought the voice was that of his ſon *Jacob*, he bleſſed him. Now *Jacob* was ſcarcely come out, when *Eſau*, ignorant of what had happened, returned with the veniſon; but when he heared how his brother had circumvented him, and that his father alſo refuſed to retract what he had done, he wept bitterly, and in the violence of his paſſion ſwore to murder *Jacob* as ſoon

ſoon as their father was dead. So *Jacob*, to avoid his fury, taking leave of *Iſaac* and *Rebekah*, fled from home and went to live with his mother's relations.

CHAP. IV.

1. *The viſion of Jacob's ladder.* 2. *Jacob ſerves his uncle Laban fourteen years for his two daughters, Leah and Rachel.* 3. *Jacob has children by his wives.* 4. *Makes a new agreement with his father-in-law.* 5. *His policy to grow rich.*

1. NOW *Jacob* being on his journey was be-lated, and gathering ſome ſtones for his pillow, he lay down upon the ground to ſleep, *and he dreamed, and behold there appeared to him a ladder ſet upon the earth, and the top of it reached to Heaven, and the angels of God, were aſcending and deſcending thereon*; and on the top of all ſtood GOD ALMIGHTY himſelf, who renewed the promiſes which he had before made to his family; after which *Jacob* wakening offered up his prayers to the Great Creator, who had been pleaſed to manifeſt himſelf to him in ſo extraordinary a viſion, and he purſued his way.

'Till coming to a well near *Haran*, where the people uſed to water their flocks, he was informed that *Rachel*, the daughter of his mother's brother, *Laban*,

was approaching that way, upon which he rolled a great ſtone from the well; and making himſelf known he haſtened to inform her father of his arrival, who received him with open arms. And *Jacob* agreed to ſerve his uncle *Laban* ſeven years in the quality of a herdſman, but with this proviſo, that as ſoon as the term was expired he ſhould give him his daughter *Rachel* for a wife; and *Laban* promiſed; but when the time was come, he contrived to paſs his elder daughter *Leah* upon *Jacob*, by putting her in *Rachel*'s place. However, he afterwards gave *Rachel* to him alſo, on condition that he would ſerve him ſeven years longer.

3. Now *Jacob* did not love *Leah* ſo well as *Rachel*, wherefore GOD took compaſſion on her, and ſhe bare *Jacob* ſix ſons, *Reuben*, *Simeon*, *Levi*, *Judah*, *Iſſachar*, *Zebulun*, and one daughter called *Dinah*; but *Rachel* was barren: and ſhe envied her ſiſter's happineſs in having children, ſo ſhe prevailed on her huſband to take a maid-ſervant ſhe had, called *Bilhah*, for ſaid *Rachel*, perhaps I may have children by her; and this woman bore *Jacob* two ſons, and *Rachel* called the firſt *Dan*, and the ſecond *Napthali*. Upon which *Leah* ſeeing that ſhe had left off bearing, came to *Jacob* alſo, and prayed him to accept of a maid of her's callen *Zilpah*, and *Jacob* complying, this woman brought him two ſons more and *Leah* called their names *Gad* and *Aſhur*. And GOD, at length hearkening to *Rachel*'s prayer, ſhe brought

brought *Jacob* a ſon alſo, and they called his name *Joſeph*.

5. *Jacob* ſeeing his family increaſed in this manner, thought it was full time to think of returning back into his native country; whereupon he went to his father *Laban*, and told him his deſign, at the ſame time deſiring that he would give him his wives and his children, for which he had ſerved him ſo long and ſo faithfully, and let him go. But *Laban* intreated him not to depart, yet, for he ſaw that GOD bleſſed every thing which *Jacob* was concerned in, and had bleſſed himſelf for *Jacob*'s ſake. And he told him, moreover, that if he would ſtill remain in the ſtation he was, it ſhould be on his own terms, for he would give him whatever wages he demanded; this was a fair propoſal; and *Jacob* anſwered, that if he would conſent to give him all the beaſts which were at that time among his cattle either ſpeckled or ring-ſtreaked, and all that might, from that time till he left him, be brought forth ſo, he would ſtay. And *Laban* accepted his ſervice upon this condition. So *Jacob* removed his portion of the flocks three days journey diſtant from his father-in-law's, and putting them under the care of proper officers, he ſtayed to take care of *Laban*'s himſelf.

And *Jacob* thought of the following device to increaſe the number of cattle which ſhould fall to his ſhare. He took ſome thin twigs of different trees, and peeling the out-ſide rinds off from them in

ſtreaks, ſo that the white might here and there appear, he ſtuck them up in the gutters, and near the watering places where he knew the beaſts uſed to come together, and the females having theſe twigs conſtantly before their eyes during the time of conception, brought forth their young almoſt all of two colours. However, I hope I need not obſerve to my young readers, that this action of *Jacob*'s, alſo, muſt be looked upon as the effect of Divine Inſpiration. And as no ſuch excuſe can be made now, a fraud of this kind would be highly blameable; for we are not to take ſiniſter meaſures to profit ourſelves upon any account, even in our dealings with intire ſtrangers, much leſs in thoſe with our neareſt friends and relations.

CHAP. V.

1. *Jacob quits his father-in-law's ſervice.* 2. *Is purſued by Laban.* 3. *Wreſtles with an angel.* 4. *Meets his brother Eſau.* 5. *Dinah is raviſhed.* 6. *The Shechemites ſlain.*

1. NOW *Laban* began to diſlike his ſon-in-law's ſucceſs, and thinking to evade an engagement by which he found himſelf in the way to be ſo conſiderable a loſer, he changed *Jacob*'s wages no leſs than ten times, but the hand of GOD as often turned

ed it to *Jacob*'s advantage.

And *Jacob* on the other hand began to be diſpleaſed at his father-in-law's treatment; he thought, theſe proceedings were but an ill return for the long ſervices he had done him. Beſides, he did not know how far *Laban*'s reſentment might carry him at laſt, perhaps to the deſtruction of himſelf and family. Wherefore ſending one day for *Leah* and *Rachel* to come out to him in the field, where he was watching and feeding the cattle, he told them his fears; and that he plainly perceived *Laban* and his ſons, had for ſome time looked upon him with jealous eyes, and that it was high time to think of providing for their mutual ſafety.

His wives, as their duty directed them, made anſwer that they were all obedience to whatever he propoſed, and in the end it was determined among themſelves, to move off with their ſervants and cattle, without giving *Laban* any previous notice of their deſign; and this *Jacob* accordingly executed in the night, getting a conſiderable way from the place before any body knew of his departure.

2. But the news was no ſooner brought to his father-in-law, than in a great paſſion, getting a number of his people together he prepared to follow him; and he was now almoſt come up to the ſpot on which *Jacob* had pitched his tents, when GOD appearing to *Laban* in a dream bid him to beware of what he was about, for if he offered to hurt a hair of

Jacob's head, he would ſeverely puniſh him. And *Laban* waking, went with his retinue towards *Jacob*, but paying a juſt regard to the warning he had received, he only chid him for leaving his country in that clandeſtine manner; and ſearching for ſome *images* of his, which he imagined were ſtolen by ſome of *Jacob*'s family, he returned, firſt ſetting up a land-mark beyond which neither party ſhould preſume to paſs, in order to do a miſchief to the other.

3. After this *Jacob* purſued his rout, when tidings were brought him, that his brother *Eſau*, at the head of four hundred men, was coming upon the march to meet him. This terrified *Jacob* exceedingly, notwithſtanding which he determined not to retreat, but imploring the Divine protection, he picked out ſome of the beſt of his cattle, in number about ſix hundred, and ordering them to be driven before, in different flocks, as a preſent to his brother, he then diſpatched his wives and children, following in the rear all alone.

And being come to the ſide of a brook, the Holy Scriptures inform us, that *Jacob* was wreſtled with by an *angel*, from the ſetting of the ſun, to the breaking of the day; and ſtill reſiſting with great ſtrength, the *angel* at laſt touched him on the hollow of the thigh, which occaſioned *Jacob* to halt ever after. And it was upon this account, that the *Jews* never eat of the ſinew that ſhrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh.

4. But

4. But we are further told, that this *angel* at the ſame time changed *Jacob*'s name into that of *Iſrael*, who, procuring his bleſſing, went forward to meet his brother. And *Eſau* having by this met the people with the preſent, began to be ſoftened, and at laſt totally forgetting his anger, when *Jacob* preſented himſelf, he immediately fell upon his neck and kiſſed him, and wept. *Jacob* then brought his wives, and his ſons, and his daughter, who all bowed themſelves before *Eſau*, and many tokens of kindneſs and civility being paid and received on both ſides, they parted; an excellent leſſon to teach ſuch near relations how to behave towards one another with condeſcenſion and affection; and not by pride and bitterneſs, to inflame any little heats that may poſſibly riſe betwixt them. Let every brother then be *Jacob* in his ſubmiſſion to his brother, and *Eſau* in his readineſs to forgive.

5. *Jacob* having thus by his prudent behaviour turned his brother's reſentment into friendſhip, purchaſed a field in a place called *Succoth*, in which he erected an altar, and pitched his tents. But he had not been long ſeated there, before a misfortune happened to his family, in the perſon of his daughter *Dinah*, who was raviſhed by *Shechem* ſon of *Hamor* the prince of the country, while ſhe was upon a viſit to ſome of the female inhabitants: but *Dinah* being extremely beautiful, the young prince was willing to marry her; and his father

father *Hamor*, at *Shechem*'s deſire, began to treat with *Jacob* about the match.

6. Nor was *Jacob* deaf to *Hamor*'s propoſal, but conſulting with his houſehold, it was agreed, that the marriage ſhould take place, on condition that the king, and all his male ſubjects, would conſent to be circumciſed; and to this they readily ſubmitted. When on the third day, at the time that their wounds were the moſt uneaſy, *Simeon* and *Levi*, two of *Jacob*'s ſons, entered among them armed, and without ſparing either age or rank, ſlew all thoſe unfortunate people, unable, from their circumſtances, to make any reſiſtance; and afterwards plundering the city, they brought all the wives and daughters of the inhabitants into captivity. But this bloody and cruel enterprize was ſorely affecting to the pious *Jacob*, who by no means applauded the barbarity of his ſons; but, on the contrary, reproved them ſeverely for committing an action which even the outrage offered to their ſiſter could by no means excuſe. However it had this good effect, that it ſtruck ſuch a terror into the neighbouring nations, that none of them dared riſe to revenge upon *Jacob* the inhumanity of his ſons.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

1. *Jacob by God's command removes to Beth-el.* 2. *Rachel dies in child-birth of Benjamin.* 3. *The death of Iſaac.* 4. *Joſeph is hated by his brothers.* 5. *They attempt to murder him.* 6. *Joſeph is ſold for a ſlave.* 7 *The art of the brothers to diſguiſe the truth from their father.*

1. THINGS being thus ſettled, God commanded *Jacob* to remove his habitation to *Beth-el*, and build an altar there, in remembrance of his

his having appeared to him in that place, at the time when he fled from his brother *Esau:* and *Jacob* ordered all the people belonging to him, who had *idols*, to fling them away, and have recourse to the true worship; and GOD blessed him, and renewed his promises.

2. But about this time *Jacob* suffered a very grievous affliction, his beloved wife *Rachel* dying in child-bed of her second son, whom with her last breath she named *Benjamin*; and after having buried her, *Jacob* pursued his journey 'till he arrived at his father's dwelling-place, whom he had once more the honour and happiness of embracing before death.

3. For *Isaac* was a very old man, upwards of a hundred and four-score years of age, when his son *Jacob* returned to see him. And *Isaac*, blessing *Jacob*, died, and was honourably interred by his two sons, who after his death parted their families, *Esau* withdrawing to *Mount Seir*, while *Jacob* remained in the peaceable possession of the land of *Canaan*.

And here, my dear little reader, begins a history as delightful and instructing, almost, as any in the whole sacred Scriptures. I mean that passage in the Old Testament which generally goes under the title of *Joseph* and his brethren. And as I trust in GOD you will not fail to make the proper use of so excellent an example, I shall here set down all the remarkable circumstances of that Patriarch's entertaining life and fortune;

tune; tho' I muſt inform you, that it is impoſſible but the ſtory ſhould loſe both in its weight and beauty, by departing in a ſingle word from the language of Holy Writ.

4. You have already been informed, that *Joſeph* was the ſon of *Jacob*, by his wife *Rachel*, born to them before they left their father *Laban*'s ſervice; and the Scriptures tell us that he was a lad of about ſeventeen years old, when his brothers began to conceive a hatred againſt him, on account of the remarkable fondneſs which their father ſhewed for him, above any of the reſt of his children. *Joſeph*, for inſtance, was diſtinguiſhed by finer cloaths than any of his brothers; and though this is the natural conſequence of being a good child, ſince parents will always love ſuch, and give them every thing that can poſſibly conduce to their pleaſure or happineſs; yet was *Joſeph* very much to blame, with reſpect to his brothers, for we are farther informed by the Holy Bible, that he uſed frequently to bring tales to his father of what they did abroad, and this, as it made them grow ſtronger in their diſlike, ſo was it a very unfriendly and ungenerous thing; for tho' we are not obliged to agree with our brothers in any little folly, and it is our duty to diſſuade them from it as much as we can; yet we are by no means to be a ſpy upon their actions, or reveal ſuch to their prejudice, either to our parents or any one elſe.

But this was not all; for *Joseph* used frequently to relate two dreams which he had; the one, that as they were binding sheafs, his sheaf rose and stood in the midst of theirs; and that theirs made obeisance to his sheaf; the other, that the *Sun*, *Moon*, and eleven *stars*, paid obeisance to him also; both of which seemed to presage his future grandeur and elevation.

5. Now all these provocations put together, made *Joseph*'s brothers turn so cruelly against him, that they resolved to make away with him the first opportunity that offered. And *Jacob* accordingly sending the lad one day to see how his other sons went on, who kept their flocks in the fields, in a distant part of the country, they conspired together to slay the *dreamer*, as they called him. But *Reuben*, their eldest brother, dissuaded them from that bloody design, advising them, at the same time, rather to put him into a neighbouring pit than murder him; designing after they were withdrawn, to take him out again, and secretly convey him back to his father.

6. And this advice they listened to, so seizing poor *Joseph*, they stript off his fine cloaths, and put him down naked into the pit; and then they sat down to feast and make merry. But those unnatural brothers had hardly began their feast, when some *Midianitish* merchants passed that way, their camels loaded with spices, and other goods, which they were carrying to the markets

kets of *Egypt*, and to those people they agreed to sell *Joseph*, for thirty pieces of silver, thinking it was better to do this, than be guilty of his blood; so the merchants took *Joseph* with them, and when they arrived at their journey's end, they sold him again to *Potiphar*, captain of the guards to *Pharaoh* king of *Egypt*.

7. Mean while *Reuben*, as we have said before, having a desire to preserve *Joseph*, and being absent when he was sold, returned to the pit, but not finding him there, gave way to the most excessive grief, and went to his brothers, telling them, that he perceived they had made away with the boy, and he must never dare to look in his father's face again. Hereupon they killed a kid, and dipping *Joseph*'s coat in the blood, they brought it to their father, telling him that they found it so in the field, and that undoubtedly some wild beast or other had devoured him; which poor *Jacob* believing, he tore off his cloaths, and put ashes on his head, mourning after the custom of those days, and would take no comfort.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

1. *Joseph's chastity; is thrown into prison.* 2. *Interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's servants there.* 3. *Interprets Pharaoh's dreams.* 4. *Is advanced to great dignity, and sees his brothers.* 5. *His behaviour to them.* 6. *The deaths of Jacob and Joseph.*

1. BUT mark the end which GOD ALMIGHTY brought of all this; and let us never despair, while we place our whole trust and confidence in his holy word and commandments.

I have already told you, that the merchants to whom *Joseph*'s brothers had sold him, made money of their bargain again, as soon as they got into *Egypt*, by selling him to one *Potiphar*, a captain of the king's guard; and here he behaved with such diligence, and was so successful in every thing he undertook, that at last his master began to observe him, and in a short time making him his steward, he put all his affairs under his management.

And in this situation *Joseph* might have lived very happily, had it not been for an adventure which befel him soon after. He was a very comely youth, and his master's wife was wicked enough to take a fancy to him. Nay, she had the impudence to desire in plain terms that he would come

to

to bed to her; but he treating ſo infamous a propoſal with the juſt horror and contempt which it deſerved, ſhe determined to lay hold on a more favourable opportunity; accordingly, one day, when all the people of the houſe were abroad, except herſelf and the young man, ſhe decoyed him into her apartment, and catching him in her arms, behaved in ſuch a monſtrous manner, that he had no other method of eſcaping her fury, than by making the beſt of his way out of her ſight; which he did, leaving his cloak behind him in the ſtruggle.

This diſappointment, as we may eaſily imagine, exaſperated the wicked miſtreſs, and at the ſame time, fearing, leſt *Joſeph* might betray her, ſhe was determined to be beforehand with him. Whereupon making a moſt terrible out-cry, ſhe brought all the people within hearing about her, and when her huſband came home, ſhewing him *Joſeph*'s cloak, ſhe ſwore that the unhappy youth had made an attempt to raviſh her. This *Potiphar* believing, it is not to be wondered at if he was greatly incenſed againſt his ſervant, and immediately threw poor *Joſeph* into priſon. However, GOD ALMIGHTY turned this misfortune to *Joſeph*'s advantage likewiſe.

2. He had not been very long there, before he grew exceedingly in the *goaler*'s eſteem; in a word, he had the direction of the whole priſon, and about this time two of the king's ſervants, his *cup-bearer*, and *chief-baker*,

ker, for ſome offence or other being ſhut up in the ſame place, they had each of them on the ſame night two different dreams; and *Joſeph*, the next morning, obſerving them to look very dull and low ſpirited, took the liberty to aſk them the reaſon of it, which they told him in the following words:

I had laſt night a dream, ſaid the *cup-bearer*, I fancied that I ſaw a vine with three branches, which all on a ſudden budded, then bloſſomed, and ſo bore ripe grapes; and from thoſe I preſſed wine into a cup, giving it into the king's hand as uſual.

And ſaid the *chief baker*, I had a dream alſo: I fancied that I had on my head three wicker baſkets, in the uppermoſt of which were ſeveral baked meats for the king's table, but the birds came and eat them out of the baſket.

To theſe *Joſeph* anſwered, firſt, that the cup-bearer's three branches ſignified three days; which time would not be exceeded before he was reſtored again to the King's favour; and to the baker he told, that his three baſkets were three days alſo, in which ſpace his maſter would order him to be hanged. Now theſe things came out exactly according to his interpretation; however, tho' the cup-bearer promiſed to remember *Joſeph*, he had hardly left the priſon, before he was out of his mind; and it was two years and better ere he ever thought of mentioning him.

3. When *king Pharaoh* himſelf had an extraordinary dream; he thought he

he ſaw ſeven fat oxen come out of a river, and after that ſeven lean oxen, which eat up the fat ones; he dreamed alſo, that he ſaw ſeven full ears of corn grow out of the ground, which immediately afterwards were choaked up by ſeven blaſted ones. He mention'd this extraordinary viſion to his courtiers, and called his wiſe men and counſellors to explain it, but they all confeſſed their ignorance; when the cupbearer told the king, that while he had been in priſon a young *Hebrew* there, had interpreted a dream of his exactly. The king inſtantly ordered *Joſeph* to be ſent for, and telling him every thing as I have related it above, *Joſeph* gave his interpretation in the following manner: he told *Pharaoh*, that his dreams ſignified ſeven years of plenty, which ſhould immediately come to paſs, and after thoſe, ſeven years of famine, which ſhould ſucceed them again; and he adviſed the king to build ſtore-houſes and granaries and lay up accordingly. *Pharaoh* was convinced of the juſtice of what he ſaid, and at the ſame time telling him, that he knew no man in his kingdom ſo proper to provide againſt the coming danger as himſelf, he ſet *Joſeph* over all his people, and ordered him to be obeyed accordingly.

4. Nor was *Joſeph* remiſs in his office, ſo that by the time the famine began to rage, he had managed every thing ſo prudently, that *Egypt* knew no want, while all the countries round were ſtarving, and imploring aſſiſtance

from thence; and among the reſt *Joſeph*'s brothers came up from *Canaan*, with money to buy food for themſelves and their families.

Joſeph no ſooner ſaw them than nature began to work, for he had forgiven all their paſt cruelty, and finding that time had intirely worn him from their remembrance, he determined to try them ſeverely; he aſked therefore among many other things, whether they had any other brothers beſides thoſe he ſaw before him; to which they anſwered, that one brother of theirs, meaning *Joſeph* himſelf, was dead, and that they had another at that time, a boy (*Benjamin*, *Joſeph*'s own brother) who was at home with their old father. *Joſeph* told them that he ſuſpected the truth of this, and rather believed they were a company of ſpies: however, ſays he, if you are honeſt men go back and bring me this brother, whom you ſay is at home with your father; I ſhall detain one of you by way of ſurety, 'till the reſt return; ſo his brothers went out of his preſence, and when they came home with their proviſions, behold every man had his money in the mouth of his ſack, and at this they were frightened, thinking that *Joſeph* had done it to trepan them.

At laſt all their corn being conſumed they did not know how to act, for they knew to return to *Egypt* without *Benjamin*, was to run into the mouth of deſtruction, and they were afraid to mention the thing

to

to their father *Jacob*, because he loved the child so much, that he would never be perſuaded to part with him. However, having no remedy, they at laſt told him every thing exactly as it happened; and after much intreaty, *Jacob* was wrought upon to truſt *Benjamin* with them; but he told them, that if they did not bring him back again ſafe, he ſhould certainly die with grief.

Now the brothers returned to *Egypt* without fear; but coming before *Joſeph*, as ſoon as he ſet eyes on his brother *Benjamin* he could not forbear weeping; and he deſired that they would all dine with him at his houſe, where he treated them nobly: but afterwards making as if he would ſuffer them to depart, he ordered one of his ſervants to convey a gold cup into *Benjamin*'s ſack of corn; this they knew nothing of, but were ſcarce gone out of the gates, when *Joſeph* ſent after them, charging them with the theft; which upon ſearch being found, they all came back again greatly terrified, 'till *Joſeph* calling them into an inner room, diſcovered who he was.

6. Now news being brought of this extraordinary adventure to king *Pharaoh*, he ordered that *Joſeph* ſhould ſend for his father and family to come down into *Egypt*, which command being complied with, old *Jacob* was introduced to the king, and ſettled in the moſt fertile part of the country.

7. And *Jacob* being a very aged man, died with all his ſons about him:

and *Joſeph* having lived for many years after in great plenty and magnificence, and having ſeen his childrens children grown up, he died alſo, leaving a ſtrict charge, that whenever the children of *Iſrael* went out of *Egypt* into the promiſed land, that they ſhould take his bones along with them.

CHAP. VIII.

1. *Moſes born.* 2. *Educated by Pharaoh's daughter.* 3. *Quits Egypt.* 4. *God appears to Moſes.* 4. *Plagues of Egypt.* 6. *The children of Iſrael brought out of Egypt.*

1. BUT the happineſs which the children of *Iſrael* had ſo long enjoyed in the kingdom of *Egypt*, was now at an end. For after *Joſeph*'s death, a new king alſo ſucceeding to the throne, the *Egyptians* began to grow jealous of their great increaſe, and in order to prevent the miſchiefs which might attend it, they began to oppreſs them with the moſt inhuman tyranny, ſetting them to all manner of laborious works, 'till at laſt finding, that in ſpite of all their endeavours to the contrary, they multiplied more and more; *Pharaoh* thought of the following cruel expedient: he ordered, that all the males among the *Iſraelitiſh* children ſhould be drowned as ſoon as born; and this command was executed with ſuch rigour, that when a certain woman called *Iochabed*, the wife of *Amram*

Amram of the tribe of *Levi*, was brought to bed of a ſon, though on account of his uncommon beauty, ſhe contrived to conceal him two months, yet being afraid to keep him any longer ſhe put him into a cradle made of ruſhes, and ſmearing it on the outſide with ſome ſort of ſlime, ſhe laid him among the flags in the river *Nile*, and ſetting a little daughter, which ſhe had called *Miriam*, to watch it, ſhe went home thinking her child more likely to eſcape there, than from the hands of the *Egyptian* officers.

2. Nor had *Miriam* been long at her poſt, before ſhe had an opportunity of carrying her mother a very ſatisfactory account; for ſoon after the king's daughter coming down to bathe herſelf, one of her attendants diſcovered the baby, and brought him to the princeſs, who was ſo much taken with the prettineſs of the infant, and moved by the tears which he ſhed, that ſhe determined to have him bred up; and when *Miriam*, who by this time had mixed among the ladies, offered to run and bring her a nurſe, ſhe approved of what the child ſaid; ſo that *Moſes* (for that was the name which the *Egyptian* princeſs gave the little boy) was once more delivered into his mother's hands: nor was ſhe, having now the royal authority for what ſhe did, any longer obliged to conceal him.

3. And when *Moſes* grew up he was brought to the *Egyptian* court, where he was educated in all kind of polite learning, 'till going one day among his

country-men, while they were at their taſk, he ſaw an *Egyptian* uſe a *Hebrew* ſo cruelly, that he could not contain his reſentment: he drew his ſword therefore and killed the man on the ſpot. However, he did not think it was ſafe after this to ſtay in *Egypt*, ſo without any more ado he withdrew to a place called *Midian*, where *Jethro* reigned king; and here, marrying one of his daughters called *Zipporah*, he kept *Jethro*'s ſheep, according to the cuſtom of thoſe days. But the time was ſhortly to come, when he was to take upon himſelf a more exalted office.

4. One day when *Moſes* was in a field, near Mount *Horeb*, he ſaw a buſh before him all on a flame; but what ſtill ſurpriſed him more, was, the buſh did ſtill remain unconſumed. And when he was going nearer to ſearch into the reaſon of this extraordinary ſight; God called out to him, and commanded him to pull off his ſhoes, for the ground whereon he ſtood was holy. And to this God added, I am the God of your fathers, the God of *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*. He then told *Moſes*, that he had ſeen the afflictions of the *Iſraelites*; that he was determined to deliver them from their preſent ſlavery, and conduct them into the country he had ſo long promiſed; therefore, be of good courage, ſaid God to *Moſes*, for I will ſend you to *Pharaoh* to demand the liberty of my people. The natural modeſty of *Moſes*, his fear, and, above all, his aſtoniſhment at this event, which rendered him incapable of knowing

what

what to ſay, made him decline this great taſk: he therefore humbly beſought God, on many accounts, to excuſe him, 'till being at laſt convinced it was his duty to obey his Maker in every thing, he ſubmitted to whatever he thought proper to enjoin. However God, to render his faith more ſteady, and to ſhew him that he was all powerful, ordered *Moſes* to throw a ſheep-hook, which he had in his hand, upon the ground, which was no ſooner done, than it inſtantly turned into a ſerpent; *Moſes* affrighted was running away, but God to encourage him, bid him take it by the tail, when it ſuddenly reſumed its former ſhape. This was followed by another miracle, and God then telling *Moſes*, that he would appear to a brother of his, which he had in *Egypt*, called *Aaron*, who ſhould meet him on the way, ſtrengthen his commiſſion, and give him credit with the people; *Moſes* departed, and leaving his wife and children with his father-in-law *Jethro*, he began his journey towards the kingdom of *Egypt*.

Moſes being now advanced pretty far, God, according to his promiſe, conducted *Aaron* to meet him, and the brothers being come together, *Moſes* told all that God had commanded him, and the wonders he was to perform: and from hence they repaired to *Egypt*, and ſummoned the elders of the people together. *Aaron* delivers the meſſage, which God had ſent by *Moſes*, and *Moſes* ſtraitway

way confirmed it, by doing ſeveral miracles in their ſight. This revived the hearts of the poor *Iſraelites*, who thereupon believed and received them joyfully: and the brothers afterwards going to the *Egyptian* court, they were admitted into the king's preſence, where they delivered their meſſage in theſe words: Thus ſaith the Lord God of *Iſrael*, let my people go that they may celebrate a feaſt to me in the deſart: but the haughty *Pharaoh* treated them with the utmoſt contempt, and inſtead of complying with their demand, gave orders to his overſeers, that they ſhould augment the hardſhips of the *Hebrews*.

This threw thoſe poor creatures into deſpair, ſo that meeting with *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and unadviſedly giving way to their preſent paſſion, they diſcharged all their grief and anger upon them.

This was very afflicting to theſe good men, but God deſired them to take comfort, for ſince *Pharaoh* had begun to harden his heart, he would permit him to go on in his obſtinacy, and convince him by dreadful proofs, that he was the only true and powerful God; however, he ſaid they ſhould firſt go and perform a miracle in his ſight. But this unfortunate prince, inſtead of having his eyes opened by that extraordinary evidence, rather grew more ſevere and haughty: God therefore reſolves to make uſe of more ſenſible ſcourges, and afflict the *Egyptians* with ſuch a ſucceſſion of plagues, as ſhould oblige

lige them to diſmiſs the enſlaved *Iſraelites*.

5. The firſt of which was, that *Moſes* turned all the rivers of *Egypt* into blood, which immediately ſtagnating, were ſo offenſive, that the fiſh were ſuffocated, and the inhabitants obliged to dig for water in new places.

This was followed by one ſtill more terrible: the whole land of *Egypt* was inſtantly filled with frogs, which came among the houſes, on the tables, nay, into the very beds of the people; and this failing of the deſired effect, the country was infeſted with lice, to which the duſt was tranſformed; *Pharaoh* ſtill not ſubmitting, millions of flies came from every corner darkening the very air, and putting the people to ſuch miſery, it was hardly to be borne. However, *Pharaoh* was ſtill hard-hearted, nor was he prevailed on to let the children of *Iſrael* depart, 'till all his cattle had been killed by the murrain; all his ſubjects covered over with boils, and ulcers; 'till ſo terrible a ſtorm of hail came from Heaven, that it killed thoſe it fell upon; and beat in all the roofs of the houſes. Nor was this all the puniſhment which his obſtinacy brought upon him; for immediately after, a ſtrong wind blowing, brought ſuch numbers of locuſts, as in one night's time deſtroyed all the trees and fruits of the earth. And at laſt God, determining to wound him in the ſevereſt manner, called *Moſes* and *Aaron*, and ſpoke to them as follows; about midnight will

I enter

I enter *Egypt*, and all the firſt-born of the land ſhall die, from the firſt born of *Pharaoh*, to the firſt-born of the ſervant in the mill.

But to convince his own people of his care and indulgence, he inſtituted the paſſover: a feaſt ever after obſerved by the *Jews*, and kept on the following faſhion. Every family, or if one family was too little, two joined together, was on the fourteenth day of this month, to take a lamb or kid and kill it, it was to be a male of the firſt year without blemiſh; and when it was killed they were to take a bunch of hyſſop, and dipping it in the blood, which for that end was preſerved in a veſſel, they were to wipe the door poſts of every houſe, and they were not to ſtir out 'till the next morning. This was done to the intent, that when the Angel of the Lord ſhould go from houſe to houſe to ſlay the firſt-born of the *Egyptians*, he ſeeing the blood ſmeared on the door-poſts, might paſs over the *Iſraelites* without doing them any hurt; there were ſome other particulars attending this feaſt, as that the fleſh was to be roaſted whole, eaten with unleaven bread and bitter herbs, it was alſo to be done in haſte, ſtanding with their cloaths on and their ſtaves in their hands. All things thus prepared, God at midnight ſmote every firſt-born of the land of *Egypt*, and the wicked king at laſt fearing, that he himſelf ſhould be the next victim of God's vengeance, deſired the *Iſraelites* to go about their buſineſs, with their

their flocks and their herds, for he would ſtay them no longer. But firſt, *Moſes* by the expreſs command of God, directed his country-men to borrow jewels and plate from their *Egyptian* neighbours, who being ſupernaturally diſpoſed in their favour, the children of *Iſrael* went off loaden with ſpoils, and thanking and praiſing God for the infinite mercy he had been pleaſed to ſhew them.

5. Now the *Iſraelites* being thus relieved from their bondage and ſlavery, the Lord, for their greater encouragement and ſecurity, went before them in the day time like a pillar of ſmoak, and in the night like a pillar of fire; and he drew them round by the red ſea: but they had ſcarcely gotten to the borders of it when *Pharaoh* repenting of having let them go, ſummoned all the force which he could ſo ſuddenly raiſe, and putting himſelf at the head of them, went in purſuit of the *Iſraelites*. And on the ſixth day after the departure out of *Egypt*, he came up with them; nor did he think there was any poſſibility of their eſcaping him, as they were cloſed on all ſides: the ſea in front, huge mountains on their flanks, and his own army on the rear; nor were the poor *Iſraelites* a little ſhocked, when they beheld the approach of their old oppreſſor: nay, they began to revile *Moſes* for having brought them into ſuch inevitable deſtruction; when the Lord ſaid, lift up your rod and ſtretch your hand over the ſea; and *Moſes* did ſo, and behold the waters divided,

and

and the children of *Iſrael* marched through upon dry land; and *Pharaoh* and his army attempting to follow them, *Moſes* as ſoon as he was ſafe on the other ſide ſtretched forth his wand again, when the waves ſuddenly uniting, the king of *Egypt* and his people were drowned to the great honour of God, and the pleaſure and aſtoniſhment of the *Iſraelites*.

CHAP. IX.

1. *The Iſraelites enter the wilderneſs, and murmur for want of water.* 2. *Manna and quails are ſent.* 3 *Moſes brings water out of a rock.* 4. *Jethro arrives at the Iſraelitiſh camp.* 5. *God talks to Moſes before the people, and he goes up into the mount.*

1. GOD having in this miraculous manner, delivered his people from the hands of their enemies, now led them up under the conduct of *Moſes*, from the red ſea into the wilderneſs: and here they encountered ſeveral little inconveniences, permitted by the author of all goodneſs, in order to convince them of his infinite power. Thus, in the firſt place they came to, the waters were ſo exceedingly bitter, that it was morally impoſſible for any one to drink them: but that pious ſervant *Moſes* had no ſooner offered up his prayers to Heaven, than GOD ſhewed him a tree, the branches of which being thrown into the waters,

ters, immediately turned them as ſweet as milk; and GOD promiſed *Moſes* that while the people continued to follow his commandments, he would never fail to bleſs them. Nor is this promiſe leſs faithfully made to us, if by our wickedneſs we do not forfeit our right, like the ungrateful children of *Iſrael*.

2. But theſe were the moſt perverſe and blind generation, that ever provoked eternal juſtice. A proof of which immediately follows, when after the many miraculous inſtances of the divine mercy, which had already been ſhewn in their favour, they began to murmur again, becauſe that in coming to pitch their tents at a place called *Sin*, they could not find an immediate ſupply of bread; but GOD heard their diſcontented ſpeeches, and he rained bread from Heaven: nor in that only condeſcending to ſatisfy them, he afterwards ſent ſuch quantities of *quails*, that the ground about the camp was perfectly covered with them; this he repeated every morning and evening, and the bread was a ſort of manna.

3. However, they ſtill continued their doubts and repining; nay, in a few days they had the unparralleled ingratitude to upbraid *Moſes* and *Aaron*, for having brought them out of *Egypt* to ſtarve them in the wilderneſs; becauſe about this time, they labour-ed under a ſmall ſcarcity of water: ſo *Moſes*, by the direction of GOD ALMIGHTY, went up to a rock, and ſtriking it with his rod in the ſight of all the people, it

it began to pour forth water, and *Moſes* gave the place a name, in reference to the peoples murmuring and doubting whether GOD was among them or not.

After this the children of *Iſrael* overcame a numerous army, which was brought againſt them by a king called *Amalek*; but there was this wonderful circumſtance attending them. *Moſes* gave the command of the *Iſraelites* to a young man called *Joſhua*, and went to the top of a neighbouring hill with *Aaron* and *Hur* to view the battle; now it was obſerved, that whenever *Moſes* raiſed up his hands, in one of which he held the rod given him by GOD, that the *Iſraelites* prevailed, but, on the contrary, whenever he let them down again, the enemy had the better; for this reaſon *Aaron* and *Hur* ſupported his hands, 'till their countrymen had gotten a compleat victory. And *Moſes* built an altar, and called the name of that place *Jehòvah-Niſſi*.

4. I need not remind you I hope of *Jethro* the father-in-law of *Moſes*; I make no doubt, but that you perfectly remember every thing I have related with regard to him, as that he was king of *Midian* and that when *Moſes* went into the land of *Egypt*, he left his wife and children under his care and protection. This *Jethro* then, hearing of the wonderful thing which GOD had performed in behalf of his ſon-in-law, and the nation which followed him, in this place, came to pay him a viſit, and the Holy Scriptures

tures in particular mention, that after having returned *Moſes* his wife and children, *Jethro* gave him ſeveral pieces of good advice, to which that excellent man not only liſtened with attention, but guided his future conduct by them, being as great a proof of his wiſdom as of his virtue; ſince 'tis not only our duty, but we ſhall always find it for our intereſt, to obey the will of our parents. And after much affection and kindneſs having paſſed between them, *Jethro* returned to his own country, while *Moſes* led the *children of Iſrael* into the wilderneſs of *Sinai*.

5. And whereas GOD had hitherto ſpoken to *Moſes* in private only, and as we may ſuppoſe chiefly in dreams and viſions, he now thought proper, in honour to his beloved ſervant, to give a teſtimony of his intercourſe with him before the whole people. Wherefore calling *Moſes* to him, he commanded, that the people ſhould ſanctify themſelves, and waſh their cloaths; for, ſaid he, on the third day I will come down in their ſight, upon mount *Sinai*, and they ſhall hear me ſpeak to you from a cloud; but, at the ſame time, he commanded, that there ſhould be a bound ſet round about, beyond which none of the people ſhould preſume to advance on pain of death.

And *Moſes* did every thing according to GOD's command. When on the third day, in the morning, there was a dreadful ſtorm of thunder and lightning, and a thick cloud, at the

ſame time, covering the mountain, at laſt a trumpet ſounded, which was the ſignal for *Moſes* to bring up the people, who advanced trembling; and *Moſes* ſpeaking, GOD anſwered him again.

And *Moſes* going up into the mountain, at this time, received part of the Law; but ſhortly after the *Bible* expreſsly tells us, that not only *Moſes* but all the elders of *Iſrael* ſaw GOD there. However, it is my duty to inform you, that the word in the *Hebrew* anguage, which we tranſlate GOD, may alſo be rendered *angel*, in which ſenſe we ought certainly to take it here; and ſome days after this, *Moſes* was called by GOD into the mount by himſelf, and there he remained forty days and forty nights. We ſhall now ſee how the favoured *Iſraelites* employed their leiſure during his abſence.

CHAP. X.

1. The peoples idolatry. 2. Of Aaron and his family. 3. The blaſphemer and ſabbath-breaker ſtoned. 4. Miriam and Aaron rebel. 5. Spies are ſent to view the country. 6. The people tranſgreſs, and are puniſhed.

1. THE *Iſraelites* had been ſo long in *Egypt*, that it is not to be wondered at, if they were tainted with the vices of that country, among which idolatry was one of the moſt notorious. *Moſes*, therefore,

therefore, had not been abſent from them any great while, before they began to grow uneaſy, and deſpairing of ever ſeeing him any more, they came to *Aaron*, inſiſting that he ſhould provide Gods who might be a conductor and preſerver to them in their preſent ſituation; nor did *Aaron*, as he ſhould have done, reprove them for this abominable propoſal, but inſtead of that, being weak and wicked enough to comply with their requeſt, he deſired that they would break off the gold rings which were in the ears of their wives and daughters, and bring them to him; and out of theſe materials he made them an idol like a calf, which this ungrateful and beſotted people were ſtupid enough to worſhip, eating and drinking before it, and then riſing up to play.

But though they had turned their back from GOD, his eyes were ſtill upon them, and in the firſt heat of his anger, at ſeeing his Divine Majeſty thus openly affronted, he reſolved to deſtroy ſo vile a people at once, from the face of the earth; nor would he have delayed his vengeance a moment, had not *Moſes*, falling proſtrate, beſought him to remember the promiſe which he had made to *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, nor did he fail to urge what a handle the heathen nations would make of it, ſhould they at laſt ſee the *Iſraelites* forſaken by that GOD, who had performed ſo many wonders in their behalf. GOD, therefore, whoſe mercy is no leſs extenſive than his juſtice, reſtrained his hand;

but ordered *Moſes* inſtantly to go down from the mountain, which command being obeyed, that Holy Man advanced towards the camp, bearing a ſtone table, on which the ten commandments were engraved by the finger of GOD himſelf. Yet, ſo great was his paſſion, when at a diſtance he beheld the molten calf, and obſerved the people dancing round it, that loſing all reſpect, he ſtruck this ſacred work to the ground, breaking it all to pieces. He then ſeverely chid his brother *Aaron* for giving way to the importunities of an idle multitude, and calling on thoſe who were the worſhippers of the true GOD, to come on his ſide, the tribe of *Levi* immediately ſeparated themſelves, and the idolaters which fell by the ſword that day were no leſs than three thouſand.

5. However, tho' GOD ALMIGHTY was ſatisfied with this puniſhment for the preſent, he abſolutely refuſed to go among them any more; for he ſaid they were ſo impure a race, that he ſhould one time or other break out and conſume them. But he deſired that *Moſes* would conduct them to the promiſed land, and he would give an *angel* charge over them, which ſorely afflicted the *Iſraelites*, ſeeing that they had deprived themſelves of the Almighty's preſence by their own vain conduct. And about this time *Moſes* took the liberty of deſiring to ſee GOD's face, but was anſwered that could not be, ſince no man muſt ſee the Creator's face and live; notwithſtanding which

GOD,

God, to give a proof of his great condeſcenſion, to ſatisfy *Moſes*, paſſed by with his back parts towards him; and after that, by God's command, a rich tabernacle was made, and *Aaron* and his ſons were called to the prieſthood, and ſanctified accordingly.

Only *Nadab* and *Abihu* had reaſon to repent of this their great elevation, and that thro' their own neglect and diſobedience; for tho' it was a poſitive command from God Almighty himſelf, that no fire ſhould be made uſe of to conſume the ſacrifices on his altar, but what immediately proceeded from Heaven; yet theſe raſh young men, without paying any regard to their duty, put common fire into one of the cenſers; but they paid ſeverely for their want of obedience, for fire from God immediately breaking upon them burnt them both to cinders; nor were their friends allowed ſo much as to mourn for their untimely end, but they were taken from the tabernacle and buried without ſide of the camp.

3. There is nothing more frequently recommended to us by God, than a due reſpect to his own holy name; nor is it enough that we do not abſolutely blaſpheme our Maker, we muſt even keep ſuch a guard upon our tongues, as not to ſpeak any thing which in the remoteſt ſenſe tends that way: all naughty words, any thing like an oath therefore or a curſe is terrible; and we ſhould wonder, indeed, when reprobates guilty of ſuch wickedneſs are not immediately ſtruck dead, ſince we

ſind that in the days of *Moſes* God commanded a man, only for mentioning his name irreverently, to be ſtoned to death; which was accordingly executed: nor did he make a leſs terrible example of another wretch who broke the ſabbath, by gathering up ſticks on that ſacred holy-day, who was inſtantly put into priſon, and afterwards condemned to ſuffer the ſame puniſhment.

4. Thus did God Almighty do juſtice to particular offenders: but the *Children of Iſrael* had ſo often broke his commandments, that it was requiſite for his honour as well as their amendment, to inflict ſome general chaſtiſement, and he more than once threatened totally to diſinherit them, while he tranſferred his favour to ſome more worthy nation, which he could eaſily raiſe up; but *Moſes* ſtill implored his mercy, and ſuch was the goodneſs of that all-powerful Being, that, in regard to ſo pious a ſervant, he was at laſt content to limit their puniſhment to a forty years wandering in the wilderneſs, 'till which time was expired, he reſolved, that they ſhould not enter into the promiſed poſſeſſion. And this was a rule which the *Iſraelites* had for their ſeveral reſts and marches. When the cloudy pillar ſtood upon the tabernacle they pitched their tents round about it, and 'till that roſe again, they never preſumed to leave the place; yet did they give God many provocations, and as often felt the effects of his vengeance; but in particular

Aaron

Aaron and *Miriam*, the brother and ſiſter of *Moſes*, were ſeverely dealt with for ſome diſreſpectful behaviour of theirs towards their brother; *Korah* alſo rebelling, was ſwallowed up and burnt, he and all his adherents. Nay, ſuch was the juſtice of GOD, not to be ſwayed into partiality for any one, that when his beloved ſervant, when even *Moſes* himſelf, erred, he alſo became the object of his wrath: for, being arrived a ſecond time at a place where they could get no water, the people began to murmur, upon which GOD ordered *Moſes*, as he had done before, to take his rod, and ſtriking a rock to make water flow out of it; but *Moſes*, in the execution of this command, expreſſing himſelf in a manner as if he doubted, or at leaſt feared, the power or promiſe of the Great Creator, GOD told him, that for that crime he ſhould never live to ſee the fulfilment of his promiſe to the *Children of Iſrael*, while *Aaron*, who was a party concerned in his guilt, was taken off immediately.

And GOD declared *Joſhua* the ſucceſſor of *Moſes*, to lead the *Children of Iſrael* into the land which he was going to give them: and having now ſettled every thing relating to the law with the utmoſt exactneſs, and having ſeen the people overcome a multitude of enemies, who attempted to oppoſe their paſſage on every ſide, *Moſes* in the hundred and twentieth year of his age, went up into mount *Nebo*, from whence affording him

a ſight of the *Iſraelites* future country, GOD was pleaſed to take him to himſelf, burying his body where no man could find it. And the *Iſraelites* mourned for *Moſes* as for a father. Nor did any prophet, either before or ſince, ſave only our bleſſed Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST, ever leave ſo great a character behind him.

CHAP. XI.

1 The Iſraelites paſs Jordan. 2. Jericho miraculouſly taken. 3. The covetous man burnt. 4. The ſun and moon ſtand ſtill at the command of Joſhua. 5. Several acts of the Iſraelites; with Joſhua's death.

1. YOU have already been informed how GOD was pleaſed to appoint *Joſhua* the ſucceſſor of *Moſes*; and we find that after the death of that great prophet, HE thought proper to reveal himſelf to him much in the ſame manner. And *Joſhua*, by the command of GOD, led the people over the river *Jordan*, in which paſſage there was this wonderful particular, that as ſoon as the prieſts, who bore the *ark* of the covenant, ſet their feet in the water, the waves immediately gathered themſelves up on each ſide, leaving an open ſpace between, ſo that the *Children of Iſrael* paſſed over on dry ground; and in commemoration of this remarkable event, they ſet

up

up twelve ſtones (a ſtone for every tribe) which remained as a teſtimony for many ages after.

And the *Iſraelites* being now entered upon the *land of promiſe*, the firſt action of any moment which they performed there, was the deſtruction of that famous but wicked city, *Jericho*; to which having ſent *ſpies*, they were lodged in the houſe of one *Rahab* an idle woman; but covenanting that they ſhould ſpare her and her family when they took the town, ſhe hid them from the citizens, who ſuſpected their errand, and letting them down from her window, they purſuing her advice got off ſafe.

2. Now theſe *ſpies* encouraged the people of *Iſrael* to attack the city, but GOD being willing to give them ſtill another proof of his miraculous favour, and to ſhew them that ſtrength and numbers were unneceſſary to thoſe who were aſſiſted by his all-powerful arm; ordered that the *ark* of the covenant only ſhould be carried ſeven times round *Jericho*, preceded by ſeven prieſts, blowing each a trumpet of ram's horn, and at the ſeventh time, on a particular ſignal, the people were ordered to give a great ſhout, and immediately the walls of *Jericho* fell to the ground; and the *Iſraelites* entered the city, putting every man, woman, and child, to the ſword, only ſparing *Rahab* and her family, according to the promiſe of the *ſpies*.

3. There is hardly any ſin of a more pernicious conſequence than that of covetouſneſs

covetouſneſs; none certainly can be more oppoſite to the nature of GOD; of which truth we have a remarkable inſtance in the caſe of *Achan* an *Iſraelite*, who after the taking of *Jericho*, though all the ſpoils were expreſsly curſed, had ſome rich garments and gold in the bottom of his tent, deſigning to convert them to his own uſe. Orders had been before given for deſtroying every thing except only ſuch moveables as were immediately dedicated to the ſervice of the altar; nor was GOD to be deceived by cunning, he knew what the covetous *Achan* had done, and to manifeſt his utter abhorrence of ſuch actions, in the very next battle which the *Iſraelites* fought they were diſcomfited. HE then called HIS ſervant *Joſhua*, telling him, there was ſomething unlawful among them, 'till which was removed they muſt not expect his favour; and at laſt the matter being found out, *Achan*, with all his family, nay, even his very cattle, and the vile treaſure for which he had dared to diſobey his Maker, were brought out of the camp, and then burnt to aſhes.

4. After this GOD ALMIGHTY fought again on the ſide of the *Iſraelites*; and they took the city of *Ai* by a ſtratagem; upon which all the people round about formed a league to oppoſe them, only the cunning *Gibeonites* contriving by fraud, to obtain their friendſhip and protection, were condemned to perpetual ſlavery. And five kings came againſt

Joſhua

Joſhua in one day, with their armies, when going up againſt them, he not only got the better, but GOD rained hail-ſtones upon them of ſuch prodigious magnitude, that there were more ſlain by that means than by the ſword of the *Iſraelites*. *Then ſpake Joſhua in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the Children of Iſrael; and he ſaid in the ſight of Iſrael, Sun, ſtand thou ſtill upon Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon:* and the Sun ſtood ſtill, *and the Moon ſtayed, until the people had avenged themſelves of their enemies. And there was no day like to that, either before nor after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man.* And *Joſhua* dragged the five kings out of a cave where they had hid themſelves after the battle, and he hanged them up.

5. Fearful and wonderful are all the works of GOD, thus did he manifeſt himſelf in favour of his people *Iſrael*; nor thus only, for they gained many ſucceeding battles; no nation could ſtand before them; ſo they began to ſettle themſelves in the country, parcelling out the land which they had conquered among the ſeveral tribes. And *Joſhua* took up his reſidence in the city *Timnath-Serah* in mount *Ephraim*. And he died there after having exhorted the people, being an hundred and ten years old. And the *Children of Iſrael* buried *Joſhua*, continuing to ſerve GOD, and act according to all his ſtatutes and commands, for many years after.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

1. *Deborah judges Iſrael.* 2. *Jael kills Siſera.* 3. *Gideon delivers the people.* *Jephthah's vow.* 5. *Sampſon is born.* 6. *Dalilah's falſehood.* 7. *Sampſon dies.*

1. JOSHUA being now dead, the *Iſraelites*, from a peaceable poſſeſſion of the land of *Canaan*, had no longer any occaſion for a general; they put themſelves therefore under a new form of government; their chief magiſtrates were called judges: and by theſe they

they were ruled for a great number of years, often offending GOD, and as often feeling the effects of his reſentment; when *Deborah*, a woman of great wiſdom and piety, was advanced to the honour of that high office. She was a propheteſs, the wife of *Lapidoth*, and at this time the people, for ſome wickedneſs they had committed, being delivered into the hands of an enemy, the commander of whoſe army was a man named *Siſera*. She choſe out one from the *Iſraelites* called *Barak*, he was a youth the ſon of *Abinoam* of *Kedeſh-naphtali*, and deſiring him to head a band of his countrymen againſt the common foe, ſhe told him that GOD would give him a victory. So *Deborah* and *Barak* went up towards mount *Tabor*, with ten thouſand men, and there they overcame *Siſera* and all his hoſt, though greatly ſuperior to theirs, and ſtrengthened beſides with nine hundred chariots of iron.

2. Now *Siſera* being purſued after the battle, thought the moſt likely way for him to eſcape, would be to leave his horſes and attendants, and take to his feet. He alighted therefore from his chariot, and making the beſt of his way, at laſt arrived at the tent of one *Jael*, the wife of *Heber* the *Kenite*. And *Jael* went out to meet *Siſera*, ſaying, turn in my lord, turn into me and fear not. And when he had turned into her tent, ſhe covered him with a mantle. And deſiring a draught of water, ſhe gave him ſome milk; this,

this, with the fatigue as we may naturally ſuppoſe of his flight, ſoon ſet him to ſleep; and now the chief enemy of the *Iſraelites* was in their power. So *Jael* took a nail and a hammer in her hand, and went ſoftly to him, and driving the nail through his temples, ſhe faſtened his head to the ground. And this ſeemingly ungenerous and cruel action, was pre-ordained by the all-wiſe Creator, to let the *Iſraelites* ſee that the weakeſt inſtruments in his hands, were more effectual than all the might and power upon earth.

The children of *Iſrael* being again ſet free, behaved tolerably well for ſome time; however, not being able to perſiſt in that good courſe, they once more began to run into the vice of their neighbours, committing idolatry, and all ſorts of infamous actions, at which GOD being incenſed, he delivered them afreſh into the hands of the *Midianites*, under whom they endured a ſeven years bondage.

3. Nor did he relieve them from their inſupportable burden 'till quite broken in ſpirit they raiſed their cry to heaven; when ever ready to redreſs, upon penitence, and promiſe of future good behaviour, he gave them another proof of his protection, by raiſing up *Gideon* for their deliverance.

Now *Gideon* was a young man, the ſon of *Joaſh*, when being one day threſhing in a barn, an angel appeared to him, and told him, that he was the perſon whom GOD had pitched on for the deliverance of his

his people. *Gideon* it ſeems did not know who he was, for he immediately went into the houſe, and bringing forth fleſh meat and other victuals, intreated the ſtranger to ſit down. But the angel ordering him to take the fleſh, and lay it on the top of a neighbouring rock, he conſumed it with fire in a miraculous manner before *Gideon's* face, and forthwith vaniſhed. There was now no longer doubt about the nature of the perſon he had ſeen, and being afterwards directed in a dream, *Gideon* roſe up in the night-time, cut down a grove, and deſtroyed an altar raiſed by the *Midianites*, to their idol god *Baal*. This incenſed thoſe people, they raiſed an army, and *Gideon* ſupported by GOD met them in the field with 32000 men. But the Lord ordered him to proclaim, that whoſoever was afraid ſhould quit the army, leaſt the *Iſraelites* ſhould boaſt of being ſaved by their own numbers. And hereupon, 22000 men retired to their own homes, but GOD ſtill thinking the remaining 10000 too many, ordered *Gideon* to carry them down to the water, and to chuſe only thoſe that lapped water like a dog, and not thoſe that bowed down on their knees to drink; which reducing their number to 300 men, with theſe GOD moſt miraculouſly was pleaſed to deliver his people, and deſtroy at one time 120,000 of the *Midianites*, together with ſeveral of their princes. And thereby the *Iſraelites* were entirely delivered

vered from the *Midianitiſh* yoke.

4. One would imagine that this ſignal act of mercy, ſhould have rendered the *Jews* the moſt zealous worſhippers of GOD, to all future generations; but it was far otherwiſe, for after *Gideon*'s death, they returned again to groſs idolatry, nor did they deſiſt from that abominable practice, 'till GOD had raiſed up againſt them the numerous armies of the *Ammonites*, which ſtruck ſuch a conſternation through *Iſrael*, that they did not know where to fly to. At this time then *Jephthah* the *Gileadite* appeared to defend them. He was a man of great valour, but in one inſtance guilty of unpardonable raſhneſs; for being on the eve of a battle, he vowed a vow, that if the LORD would deliver his enemies into his hands, whatſoever came firſt out of his houſe to meet him, ſhould be offered for a burnt ſacrifice; and having totally overcome the *Ammonites*, on his returning home, the firſt perſon that came out of his houſe, was his only daughter and child, with timbrels and dances to meet him.

Nothing could be more afflicting than this ſight to *Jephthah*, which turned all his triumph into mourning: he acquainted his beloved daughter, with what he had done, who with admirable reſignation ſubmitted to it, and intreated him not to depart from his vow, out of tenderneſs to her. However, it is by no means clear, that *Jephthah* offered his daughter for a burnt ſacrifice. And I rather be-

believe he did not, ſince ſuch were abominable to GOD, and would have been ſtill a greater crime if poſſible, than his perjury. All we can gather of this matter from the Bible, is, that *Jephthah*'s daughter being permitted to go upon the mountains two months with her companions, to bewail her virginity, that on her return, *Jephthah did with her* according *to the vow that he had vowed.* However, it is generally believed, that he only dedicated her life in a ſpecial manner to the ſervice of GOD.

5. Now *Jephthah* being dead, the *Iſraelites*, after having been governed by ſeveral other judges, fell at laſt into the hands of the *Philiſtines.* Indeed the various crimes they had committed during that ſeries of years deſerved no leſs a puniſhment; yet GOD, ſtill mindful of his promiſe to his ſervant *Abraham*, would not abandon them entirely, and at this time there being a man whoſe name was *Manoah*, of the tribe of *Dan, an angel* appeared to him and his wife, giving them an aſſurance, that they ſhould have a ſon, who in proceſs of time, ſhould bring his country out of their preſent bondage. Nor was this prediction long in coming to paſs, for *Samſon* being born ſhortly after, and growing to man's eſtate, caſt his eye on a woman at *Timnath*, of the daughters of the *Philiſtines*, whom he deſired his father and mother to procure for his wife. *Manoah* oppoſed his choice at firſt, but afterwards conſidering better of the matter, he and his wife went

with their ſon towards *Timnath*, and as *Samſon* was at ſome diſtance from them, in their way, *behold a young lion roared againſt him, and the ſpirit of the Lord came mightily upon him, and he rent the lion as he would have rent a kid, and he had nothing in his hand; but he told not his father and mother, of what he had done.* So proceeding on their journey, and gaining the conſent of the young woman and her parents, a day was reſolved on for the nuptials of *Samſon*.

The feaſts at the *Jewiſh* marriages, were very magnificent; there is no doubt therefore, that *Samſon*'s was equal to any of his neighbours, and having on his return to his father's houſe, before he came to be married, found a neſt of bees with honey, in the carcaſs of the young lion he had killed; he propounded this riddle to thirty young men of the *Philiſtines*, who came to make merry with him on his wedding-day. *Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the ſtrong, ſweetneſs*, promiſing thirty changes of raiment, and other things of value, if within a fixed time they could expound the ſame; but provided they could not, they were to give him a like reward Now, the ſet term being almoſt elapſed, they prevailed on *Samſon*'s wife, to get the ſecret out of him, which being revealed to them, ſo inraged him, that he killed thirty *Philiſtines*, giving their cloaths in contempt to the expounders of the riddle; and after this in his abſence, his wife being given to another man, he caught three hundred foxes,

foxes, and tying them tail to tail, with fire-brands between each, he let them looſe among the ſtanding corn of the *Philiſtines*; conſuming not only that, but their vineyards, and olives. This enraging thoſe people, they burnt both his wife and her father; whereupon *Samſon* ſmote them hip and thigh, with great ſlaughter; and dwelt upon the top of a rock. Now the *Philiſtines* being gathered together, for revenge, the men of *Judah* perſuaded *Samſon* to let them bind him with cords, and deliver him up to the *Philiſtines*; who ſeeing him bound gave a great ſhout, upon which the ſpirit of the LORD coming upon *Samſon* he ſnapt the new cords, as if they had been burnt flax, and finding the jaw bone of an aſs, he ſlew with that ſimple weapon, upwards of a thouſand *Philiſtines*.

6. But of what little conſequence is ſtrength or wiſdom, if we give ourſelves up to vice. *Samſon*, that could not be overcome by multitudes, was at laſt deſtroyed by a ſingle woman.

The lords of the *Philiſtines*, having ſought all opportunities to be revenged of *Samſon*, to no purpoſe, at laſt had recourſe to a woman, named *Dalilah*, for whom he had a great affection; offering her mighty rewards, if ſhe could prevail upon him to reveal wherein his great ſtrength lay. Three ſeveral times he amuſed her with wrong accounts, and ſo eſcaped the ſnare laid for him: But

at length, *when ſhe preſſed him daily with her words, and urged him ſo, that his ſoul was vexed unto death, he told her all his heart, and ſaid unto her, there hath not come a razor upon mine head; for I have been a* Nazarite *unto God from my mother's womb: if I be ſhaven, then my ſtrength will go from me, and I ſhall become weak, and be like any other man. Dalilah* hereupon making him ſleep upon her knees, ſent for the lords of the *Philiſtines*, and cauſed a man to ſhave off the *ſeven locks of his head, and his ſtrength went from him, and the* Philiſtines *took him, and put out his eyes, and brought him down to* Gaza, *and bound him with fetters of braſs; and he did grind in the priſon-houſe.* And thus was *Samſon* ſeverely puniſhed, for revealing his ſecrets to a wicked proſtitute.

7. But in a little time *Samſon*'s hair beginning to grow again, his ſtrength alſo returned: mean while the *Philiſtines* triumphed exceedingly in their conqueſt; and on a time making a ſacrifice in gratitude to their god *Dagon*, who they ſuppoſed had delivered their enemy into their hands, being very merry, they ſent for *Samſon* to make them ſport; who being brought and placed between the two pillars that ſupported the houſe, he took one in each hand, and calling upon God to aſſiſt him that once, to revenge himſelf for his two eyes, and deſiring to die with them, *he bowed himſelf with all his might, and the*

the houſe fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein: ſo the dead, which he ſlew at his death, were more than they which he ſlew in his life.

CHAP. XIII.

The hiſtory of Ruth.

HONOUR, ſays the ALMIGHTY, *your father and mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.* Theſe are the words of the fifth commandment; and as we find the bleſſing therein promiſed to dutiful children, moſt wonderouſly fulfilled in the hiſtory of *Ruth*, I ſhall in this place, my dear little readers, lay her whole ſtory before you; at the ſame time moſt humbly beſeeching the Divine providence, that it may be ſo engraven on your hearts, as to bring forth that good fruit neceſſary to entitle you to a like reward.

In the courſe of this hiſtory, you muſt have frequently obſerved, that the eaſtern countries are extremely ſubject to ſcarcities, and famine; and the holy ſcripture informs us, that it was in the midſt of one of thoſe national diſtreſſes, when a woman of the *Iſraelites*, named *Naomi*, together with her huſband, and her two ſons, went into the land of *Moab*, in order to procure themſelves bread; and here her two ſons, after having married each of them a

wife from among the people of that country died, as did her huſband, leaving their widows to ſhift for themſelves, in the beſt manner they were able.

Now *Naomi* being informed that corn began to grow plenty once more, in the land of *Judah*, thought of returning again to her native place; ſhe endeavoured therefore to perſuade *Orpah* and *Ruth*, the widows of her deceaſed ſons, to leave her in her misfortunes, and return to their mother's houſe, where they would probably be leſs expoſed to the hardſhips her poverty and affliction muſt needs involve them in: and *Orpah* being moved by her arguments, took leave of her mother; but *Ruth*, having more piety, and a ſtronger faith in God's provi dece, ſaid to *Naomi*, *Intreat me not to leave thee, or return from following after thee; for whither thou goeſt, I will go; and where thou lodgeſt, I will lodge: thy people ſhall be my people, and thy God my God: where thou dieſt, will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do ſo to me, and more alſo, if aught but death part thee and me.* When *Naomi*, ſeeing ſhe was ſtedfaſtly reſolved, deſiſted from her perſuaſions; and *they two went until they were come to* Bethlehem.

It was the beginning of barley-harveſt, when *Naomi* and *Ruth*, arrived at *Bethlehem*; and *Ruth* going to glean in the fields of *Boaz*, a very wealthy relation of *Naomi*'s late huſband, *Boaz* caſt his eyes upon her; and being informed who ſhe was, he

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applauded her dutiful behaviour to her mother-in-law, and enjoined her to glean in no other field but his, during the whole time of harveſt, and to keep faſt by his maidens; and after ſhe came to glean, he ordered his ſervants, that they ſhould throw handfuls on purpoſe for her to take up; which they did, inſomuch, that when ſhe had beat out that ſhe had gathered it was a large ſack of barley.

Naomi, as we may gueſs, rejoiced not a little, at *Boaz*'s kindneſs to her daughter-in-law; and being willing to improve his favourable diſpoſition to her, ſhe commanded *Ruth* to watch the place of his repoſe, in the threſhing-floor, where he was to winnow barley that night; and when he was laid down, and was fallen aſleep, to uncover his feet, and to lay herſelf down by him. *Ruth* obeyed, and being laid down by him, he awoke at midnight, and was at firſt ſurpriſed, to find a woman at his feet; but *Ruth* revealing herſelf, and claiming of him the right of marrying her, according to the *Jewiſh* cuſtom, as being her near kinſman he applauded her choice, in that ſhe had not ſet her heart on a young, indiſcreet man; and told her, that there was ſtill a nearer relation than he, of whom he would require to perform the duty of neareſt kinſman; and if he declined it, he himſelf would marry her. And in the morning preſenting her with ſix meaſures of barley, he diſmiſſed her, with much civility and kindneſs.

Nor did *Boaz* reſt 'till he had made good his promiſe to *Ruth*, for having, as was the cuſtom, required publickly, the neareſt kinſman to marry her, and he having declined it, *Boaz* took witneſſes of it, and eſpouſed her himſelf: and in proceſs of time, ſhe conceived, and bore a ſon, who was called *Obed*, who was the father of *Jeſſe*, the father of king *David*; from which ſtock, according to the fleſh, afterwards deſcended our bleſſed Lord and Saviour *Jeſus Chriſt*. And thus gloriouſly, for an example to all children, was *Ruth* rewarded for her filial duty to her mother-in-law.

CHAP. XIV.

1. *The birth of Samuel.* 2. *His adminiſtration.* 3. *King Saul.* 4. *He diſpleaſes God.* 5. *David kills Goliah.* 6. *The death of Samuel.* 7. *Nabal's churliſhneſs.* 8. *The death of Saul.*

NOW there was a man named *Elkanah*, who had two wives, one of which *Peninnah*, had children; but *Hannah* the other was barren. This was ſufficient to make them live uneaſy together. Accordingly they ſpent their time in continual envy and upbraiding, 'till *Hannah* going one time up to the houſe of GOD at *Shiloh*; ſhe kneeled down there and prayed devoutly, and if GOD would pleaſe to grant

grant her a ſon, ſhe promiſed to devote him all the days of his life to his ſervice. Her prayers were heard, and in a proper time ſhe brought forth a ſon, whom ſhe called *Samuel*. And after he was come to a fit age, ſhe brought him to *Shiloh*, and in a very joyful manner, preſented him to *Eli* the prieſt, who gladly received, and immediately cloathed him in a proper habit, that he might attend on the ſervice of the tabernacle. Now *Eli* was a very good man himſelf, but he had two ſons, *Hophni* and *Phineas*, who were meer libertines. Nor did he chaſtiſe them as his authority required, 'till at length God was ſo provoked, that he foretold the utter deſtruction of his family to *Samuel*, which was the firſt revelation he made to this young prophet, and it was ſhortly after brought to paſs. For the people in the joy of their hearts, to find that they had once more got a prophet among them, ſome few years after, attempting to free themſelves from the yoke of the *Philiſtines*, under which they had long ſuffered; they were routed, and not routed only, but they loſt the ark of God, which they had carried with them into the battle, and this was ſo ſevere an affliction to old *Eli*, that though both his ſons were killed in the action, the bare news of that alone, threw him into a fit, in which he fell down and broke his neck; a daughter-in-law dying at the ſame time in childbirth, which in ſome meaſure,

ſure, was the ruin of his whole houſe.

2. The *Philiſtines* having thus got poſſeſſion of the ark, carried it in triumph to one of their principal cities, but finding themſelves ſorely tormented with plagues on that account, as well as that wherever it came, their idols fell down before it, they were glad to return it to the *Iſraelites* again; this they accordingly did, with ſome preſents, and it being received with great joy by the people, *Samuel*, who had now entered upon his prophe tick adminiſtration, took that opportunity of bringing them to a ſenſe of their manifold tranſgreſſions. They wept therefore, and held a ſolemn faſt, which was ſo acceptable to GOD, that in a little time they gained ſuch a ſignal victory over the *Philiſtines*, as prevented thoſe idolaters from venturing to moleſt them for a great while. After this action, the moſt part of *Samuel*'s, government was employed in a peaceable adminiſtration of juſtice; but as he grew in years, he appointed his ſons, *Joel* and *Abiah*, to the execution of that office, who became ſo mercenary, and currupt, that the elders of *Iſrael* came to *Samuel* in a body, demanding to have a king ſet over them, as there was in other nations. This demand was by no means agreeable to the prophet; however he conſulted GOD upon it, who anſwered, that he ſhould comply with the people; but firſt ordered, that he ſhould inform them of the many inconveniences that would

would attend the completion of their requeſt. When the people ſtill perſiſting, GOD tells *Samuel*, that he will not fail to give them a king.

3. Now *Saul* the ſon of *Kiſh*, being ſent to ſeek ſome of his father's aſſes, which had gone aſtray, came to *Samuel*, to try if he could give him any intelligence of them. And GOD having apprized *Samuel*, that he was the perſon ordained to reign over *Iſrael*; as ſoon as he ſaw him, he ſhewed him all the reſpect that was due to his future character: and having anointed him king, he foretold him ſeveral events which ſhould befal him on his return home, in token of the truth, of his deſignation to that office. But this happened only between *Saul* and *Samuel* in private, he was afterwards choſen publickly by lot, nor had he been many days upon the throne, before there happened a fit occaſion for him to exert himſelf. The people of *Jabeſh-Gilead* on the other ſide of the *Jordan*, being oppreſſed by the *Ammonites*, they ſent to demand aid of king *Saul*, and he having ſummoned all *Iſrael* to come to their aſſiſtance, ſo totally routed and diſperſed the enemy, that ſcarce two of them were left together. This victory raiſed their new king's fame to a great degree, but at length he forfeited the divine favour, in the following manner.

4. His commiſſion was utterly to deſtroy the *Amalekites*, but inſtead of executing this, he ſaved *Agag* their king, and the beſt of their

their cattle alive. And when *Samuel* came to expoſtulate the matter with him, his pretence was, that what he had ſpared, was in pure reſpect to GOD; but *Samuel*, who knew very well, that this reſerve was made out of avarice, firſt laid before him the iniquity of his conduct, and then declared GOD's immoveable purpoſe of taking the kingdom from his family. After which *Samuel*, by the expreſs command of the LORD, privately anointed *David*, who being particularly ſkilled in muſick, was ſhortly afterward called to court in order to divert a melancholy kind of madneſs, which had ſeized upon the king. But it was ſome months ſubſequent to his return from thence to his father *Jeſſe*'s houſe again, that he had an opportunity of manifeſting himſelf in the face of all *Iſrael*.

5. The *Philiſtines* had not long before, received a remarkable defeat from *Saul*; but having now recruited their forces, they took the held again, when a champion named *Goliah*, of a prodigious gigantick ſtature, came out of the camp of the *Philiſtines*, challenging any one of the *Hebrews* to a ſingle combat; but none durſt venture upon it, 'till young *David* having heard what reward the king had promiſed to the perſon who ſhould kill him; *viz.* the princeſs his own daughter for a wife, he was moved by a divine impulſe to accept of the challenge, and taking only his ſtaff, a ſling, and five ſmooth ſtones out of a brook that ran by, he

he advanced towards the *Philiſtine*, who perceiving him to be little more than a boy, thought it was done in contempt, and ſwore to cut him to pieces, the very moment he came at him; but *David*'s reply was of another kind, that he came againſt him not in any confidence of his own ſtrength, but in the name of GOD; at which words, letting fly a ſtone, it hit the giant's forehead with ſuch force, that he fell flat, and *David* ran up to him, and with *Goliah*'s own ſword cut off his head. Every one admired the author of this gallant action, but none ſo much as *Jonathan*, the king's ſon, who contracted the tendereſt friendſhip for *David*. Yet the promiſed reward he was deprived of, for *Saul* began to envy *David*, and tho' he ſome time after this, gave him another of his daughters in marriage upon very hard conditions, yet he more than once laid plots againſt his life, and even attempted with his own hand to kill him.

6. Theſe proceedings drove *David* into baniſhment, where he gathered a little army, living ſometimes with them in the mountains, and ſometimes among the neighbouring infidels; nor would he, tho' he had *Saul* twice in his power, lift his hand againſt the LORD's anointed. And *David* having paid a viſit to *Samuel*, the ſcripture tells us, that great prophet died. But I cannot cloſe the ſubject of *Saul*'s hatred to *David*, without mentioning the faithful friendſhip of his ſon *Jonathan*,

than, who though he ſaw the king commit the moſt horrid cruelties upon any that preſumed to ſupport *David*, yet loved him as his own ſoul, and never failed to give him notice of whatever evil his father intended againſt him.

7. And by this time ſeveral hundred perſons having reſorted to *David*, he hearing that *Nabal*, a very rich man, whoſe ſhepherds he had formerly protected, was ſhearing his ſheep nigh hand, ſent to remind him of his civility to his ſervants, and deſired him to ſend him ſome proviſions, or whatſoever he could ſpare. But *Nabal*, being *churliſh and evil in his doings, anſwered* David's *ſervants, and ſaid, who is* David? *And who is the ſon of* Jeſſe? *There be many ſervants now-a-days, that break away every man from his maſter. Shall I then take my bread, and my water, and my fleſh, that I have killed for my ſhearers, and give it unto men whom I know not, whence they be? So* David's *young men went again, and told him all thoſe ſayings.*

David, being exaſperated at his churliſh anſwer, ordered all his followers to gird on their ſwords, and vowed by the morning light, to leave not a man alive of all *Nabal*'s family. But the ſervants of *Nabal*, fearing what might happen, went to their maſter's wife *Abigail*, and informed her of their apprehenſions, and of the civilities they had before received at *David*'s hands; who thereupon took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five ſheep ready dreſſed, with other proviſions; and having

having loaden ſeveral aſſes with them, ſhe ſet out with divers of her ſervants, unknown to her huſband, and met *David* on full march with his men, in order to deſtroy *Nabal*'s houſe and family: but being appeaſed by her graceful demeanour and humility, he received her and her preſents kindly, and was diverted from his purpoſe: and *Abigail* being very beautiful, as well as diſcreet, and *Nabal* dying for vexation when he was told what had happened, *David* took her to wife.

8. Now *Saul* being about to go up againſt the *Philiſtines*, it was foretold to him that the LORD had rent his kingdom from him, and given it to *David*; and that on the next day, GOD would deliver him, and the *Iſraelites* with him, into the hands of the *Philiſtines*; and that he and his ſons ſhould be with them in death. This terrible prediction ſo affected *Saul*, that he fell *ſtrait-way all along on the earth, and there was no ſtrength in him*; and when he recovered, he would neither be comforted nor refreſhed.

According to the prophet's prediction, however, the next day both armies having engaged on mount *Gilboa*, the *Iſraelites* were diſcomfited, and *Saul*'s ſons, *Jonathan*, *Abinadab*, and *Malchiſhua*, being ſlain, and himſelf ſore wounded, he ſaid unto his armour-bearer, *draw thy ſword, and thruſt me thro' therewith, leſt theſe uncircumciſed come, and thruſt me through, and abuſe me.* But his armour-bearer refuſing, *Saul* took a ſword and fell upon it; which

which when his armour-bearer ſaw, he likewiſe fell upon his ſword, and died with him. And when the *Philiſtines* found *Saul* among the ſlain, they cut off his head, ſent his armour to *Aſhtaroth*, and faſtened his body to the walls of *Bethſhan*, together with the bodies of his ſons; which afterwards were reſcued from them by the inhabitants of *Jabeſh-Gilead*, who decently interred their bodies. And *David* extremely lamented the loſs of *Saul*, and more eſpecially of his beloved friend *Jonathan*.

CHAP. XV.

King DAVID.

DAVID, beſides being the braveſt general, the fineſt poet, and the greateſt muſician that ever lived, had that glorious character peculiar to himſelf, of being the man after GOD's own heart: and being after the death of *Saul*, in conſequence of God's preordination, created king of *Iſrael*, the firſt action he did, was to command the two *Benjamites*, who having cut off the head of *Iſh-boſheth*, *Saul*'s only remaining ſon, brought it to him as a preſent, to have their hands and feet cut off, as a terror to all ſuch ungrateful and bloody villains, their bodies alſo being hung up in ſome publick place; nor was he unmindful of his dear departed friend *Jonathan*,

than, but reſtored to his ſon *Mephiboſheth*, a cripple, all his grandfather's eſtate, and ordered him a place at the table among his own children.

A conduct like this not only deſerves, but may always be ſure of meeting with GOD's favour; in conſequence of it therefore, *David* overcame all the people round about him, but in particular took the city of *Jeruſalem*, afterwards ſo famous all over the world; and finding at laſt a peaceful ſeaſon, he brought the ark, which for fifty years and upwards had continued at the houſe of one *Abinadab*, to his own city, ſinging and playing before it; and having conſecrated ſeveral rich materials, which he took in his ſeveral wars, to GOD, he ſat down and began to regulate the government of his kingdom, as well as that of his own private family.

But let every one be cautious, and not only reſiſt vice, but fly from it; ſince even the virtuous *David*, the man after GOD's own heart, was ſurprized into ſuch a ſucceſſion of wicked actions, by one falſe ſtep, as even the ſincereſt repentance could not compenſate for, as to his ſtate in this world. While his general *Joab* was carrying on the ſiege of *Rabbah*, *David* continued in *Jeruſalem*, and walking one evening on the top of his houſe, he chanced to ſee a beautiful woman bathing herſelf in her garden; the unguarded king, as ſoon as he ſaw her, was ſmitten, and on enquiring, being told ſhe was the

wife of *Uriah* the *Hittite*, an officer in his army, *David* ſent for her, lay with her, and diſmiſſed her. But this was not all, in order to hide the ſhame of one crime, he committed another ſtill greater; he ſent letters to *Joab*, wherein he commanded him to manage matters ſo, that *Uriah* might be killed, by the *Ammonites*, which was done accordingly; and *David* immediately after eſpouſed his widow publickly. But though he by this means, concealed his wickedneſs from the world, God was neither to be ſo deceived, nor ſatisfied. He ſent *Nathan* the prophet to *David* therefore, by an elegant parable, to repreſent the baſeneſs and villainy of what he had done. *David* accordingly confeſſes his guilt, and begs pardon, which was granted, with regard to eternal puniſhment; but God not only deſtroyed the ſon of which *Bathſheba* was ſoon afterwards delivered; but alſo told *David*, that ſeveral of his family ſhould come to untimely ends, as well as ſome of his ſons riſe in rebellion againſt him. Nor was it long before this ſentence began to be executed. For having a moſt beautiful daughter, whoſe name was *Tamar*, one of *David*'s ſons by a different mother, his eldeſt ſon *Ammon*, raviſhed her. For which brutal outrage, he was afterwards ſlain by another of *David*'s ſons called *Abſalom*; who then rebelled againſt his father, forcing him to leave the royal city. All which *David* bore with admirable patience, and reſignation

to

to the will of GOD, as being conſcious of his own guilt, in the caſe of *Uriah*; and of the divine juſtice in thus afflicting him.

Now *Abſalom* and his party entering *Jeruſalem*, were received with the general acclamations of the people; yet was not the king without ſome friends there, who gave him conſtant intelligence, of whatever the rebels deſigned: by which means *David* eſcaped ſome of their ſnares. 'Till at length the unnatural ſon, having gathered a numerous army, propoſed to give his father battle, and both parties were drawn up in the field: but the war being waged againſt a ſon for whom he had ſtill a moſt tender affection, *David* removed to a neighbouring ſhelter, charging his generals for his ſake, if they overcame and took *Abſalom*, to uſe him kindly.

But eternal juſtice, the never failing puniſher of undutiful children, tho' it permitted *Abſalom* to be the ſcourge of *David*'s fault, could not overlook his unnatural rebellion againſt his father; this wicked and abominable *Abſalom* therefore, was not only conquered (though his forces were much more numerous than the king's) but being entangled in the boughs of a tree, by his long hair, he there received the reward of his crimes, being run through the body; and inſtead of being buried like a prince, his carcaſe was thrown into a pit, and coveredwith a heap of ſtones.

However the wickedneſs of the ſon did not pre-

vent the father's grieving at his death, as it ſhould have done; for we are told that *David* wept and mourned for many days; but GOD having now given a temporal puniſhment for his crimes, began to take pity on his repentance, and *Solomon* being born, he promiſed that in him *Iſrael* ſhould have peace, and that he ſhould build him a temple, which *David* himſelf had thoughts of doing. And *David* being a very old man, grew ſo weak and feeble, that it was not poſſible, by all the help of his phyſicians, to keep heat in him; ſo having reigned forty years he died, leaving his kingdom to his ſon *Solomon*.

CHAP. XVI.

King SOLOMON.

SOLOMON's character was that of being the wiſeſt man; and undoubtedly had he not in his old age been drawn into vice by thoſe about him, no king ever deſerved that title ſo well; for beſides having the fineſt natural parts, which he proved by writing the book of Proverbs; the Canticles or Song of *Solomon*; he alſo was maſter of the moſt piercing judgment, an inſtance of which he gave in a very extraordinary cauſe that came before him. Two harlots living together, had at the ſame time each of them a child; now in the night time, one of then

the children dying, the harlot who was its mother, laid it in the place of the other woman's child, which was living, taking that, and in the morning claiming it as her's. Children were reckoned among the *Jews*, as the greateſt bleſſing, (which they certainly are if they be good) the harlot therefore would not be robbed of her infant, in that manner, but appealed to the king, who ordered the child to be divided betwixt them, and thus he diſcovered the true parent; ſhe who ſtole the child, approving of the ſentence, but ſhe who had really brought it into the world, as we may naturally ſuppoſe, could not bear to ſee her babe butchered, rather chuſing to give it up.

And *Solomon* builded a magnificent temple to GOD, being not only the glory of *Jeruſalem*, but one of the ſeven wonders of the world. In ſhort, its riches and beauty exceeded all deſcription: and his fame going far and near, the queen of *Sheba*, who reigned many thouſand miles from him, hearing of *Solomon*'s great wiſdom, (which the great and good GOD had beſtowed on him) came to prove him with hard queſtions; but confeſſing, that his glory and learning ſurpaſſed every thing in this earth; ſhe departed to her own dominions again, after having made *Solomon* many fine preſents, and receiving from him in return, many equally magnificent.

Now *David* had appointed his ſon *Solomon*, preferable to his eldeſt ſon *Adonijah*, who perceiving

all his efforts to ſucceed his father, uſeleſs, gave way to his brother's good fortune; but meditating to ſtrengthen his pretenſions to the throne, he deſired *Bathſheba*, the mother of king *Solomon*, to requeſt the king to grant him to wife *Abiſhag* the *Shunammite*, a beautiful damſel, who had cheriſhed king *David*, and miniſtred unto him, and lay in his boſom, when he was old, that no heat could be kept in him. *Bathſheba* courteouſly undertook the meſſage, not being aware of his deſign in it; and went to her ſon, the king, to requeſt this favour of him. Nor was the reſpect *Solomon* paid his mother, any ſmall ſign of his wiſdom; for as ſoon as ſhe appeared, he dutifully roſe up to meet her; and cauſing her to be placed on the throne on his right-hand, he ſat down by her, and promiſed to grant whatever ſhe ſhould deſire of him: but when he heard her requeſt, *he anſwered and ſaid, and why doſt thou aſk* Abiſhag *the* Shunamite *for* Adonijah? *Aſk for him the kingdom alſo—Then king* Solomon *ſware by the Lord, ſaying, God do ſo to me, and more alſo, if* Adonijah *have not ſpoken this word againſt his own life! Now therefore, as the Lord liveth,* Adonijah *ſhall be put to death this day.* A moſt abominable oath, and one for which, no doubt among other things, his family was curſed afterwards. So he ſent *Benaiah*, the ſon of *Jehoiadah*, who was his chief captain, and he fell upon *Adonijah*, and ſlew him: he after this removed

ved *Abiathar*, a friend of *Adonijah*'s, from being chief prieſt, putting *Zadok*, one of his own followers, into his place; and not long after, cauſed the ſame *Benaiah* to fall upon the valiant *Joab*, who had been *David*'s chief general, and to ſlay him at the horns of the altar, which he had taken hold of for a ſanctuary, he having alſo been attached to *Adonijah*, as the eldeſt ſon of his royal maſter.

And now to let you ſee, my dear child, how vain and inconſiderable a thing wiſdom is, when once we forſake virtue, and the fear of GOD; I ſhall inform you of ſome other evil actions, of this otherwiſe great king, which drew the wrath of GOD upon him and his whole family.

Solomon againſt the expreſs commands of GOD, in the law of *Moſes*, had married ſeveral wives from the neighbouring countries round about, who being all heathens and idolaters, took the advantage of his old age, to ſeduce him to their falſe worſhip, and he was wicked enough to bow before idols, unmindful of that only true power, which had done ſuch wonders for his family. Now this ſo provoked the Almighty, that he raiſed him up ſeveral powerful enemies, and among the reſt, *Jeroboam* the ſon of *Nebat*, who was a man of great valour, and one of his own officers. It happened on a time, that this perſon being cloathed with a new garment, and being gone out of *Jeruſalem*, the prophet *Abijah* the *Shilonite* met him in the field, and

taking hold of his new garment, he rent it in twelve pieces, giving ten of them to *Jeroboam*, and declaring to him, that after *Solomon*'s death, the LORD would in like manner rend ten tribes from the hands of his ſon, and give them to him, as a puniſhment for *Solomon*'s ſin of idolatry; and at the ſame time promiſing to eſtabliſh *Jeroboam*'s kingdom over *Iſrael*, if he walked in the way of the LORD. After this, *Jeroboam* fled into *Egypt*, to avoid the wrath of *Solomon*, who would have killed him, to fruſtrate *Ahijah*'s prophecy.

CHAP. XVII.

King REHOBOAM.

BUT *Solomon* being dead, his ſon *Reboboam* was made king in his ſtead; and as ſoon as *Jeroboam* heard this, he came from *Egypt* to *Jeruſalem*, and joining himſelf to the congregation of *Iſrael*, they petitioned the king for a redreſs of the grievances, that had crept into the government, in the latter part of his father's reign; rendring their duty and ſervice to him, if he would make their burthens lighter. Upon this, the king conſulted with his old counſellors, who adviſed him to ſooth their inflamed paſſions, and to promiſe them a redreſs of their grievances, in order to ſecure their faith

and

and allegiance to him, at the beginning of his reign.

But this young prince, being vainly puffed up with his new dignity, would not condescend to sooth the passions of the people; but adhered to the advice of persons of his own age and inexperience, the companions and favourites of his youth, who persuaded him, that it was most becoming of the royal dignity, to threaten and terrify the people into their duty, rather than to appear to comply in the least with their petitions; being of the opinion of those court-flatterers, who would persuade young princes, to their ruin, that the people were made for slaves to the prince, and born with saddles on their backs, and that a monarch had no more to do, but get up and ride: which advice many indiscreet princes, both before and since *Rehoboam*, have so far pursued, 'till the oppressed people, being tired with their burdens, have risen as one man, and cast their unkingly rider: as proved to be the case with this misled prince.

For *Jeroboam*, and the elders of the people, attending the king at the appointed time, for an answer to their petitions, this rash prince, according to the advice of his young counsellors, answered them roughly, saying *My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips: but I will chastise you with scorpions.* This answer enraging the people, they cried out, *what portion have we in* David?

David?—*To your tents, O* Iſrael! *Now ſee to thine houſe*, David! And immediately departing, ten tribes fell off from the houſe of *David*, and choſe *Jeroboam* for their king, according to the word of *Ahijah* the prophet.

Thus *Rehoboam*, by his monſtrous folly, in rather liſtening to the advice of boys, than his old and experienced counſellors, loſt the moſt conſiderable part of his dominions. But what better could be expected, from what never ends in any good, obſtinacy, and an opinion of one's own judgment, in preference to thoſe, who by their age and ſtation are fitter to direct us. Nor was *Rehoboam*'s ſtubbornneſs, attended with ill conſequences to himſelf only, for the kingdom of *Iſrael* and *Judah* ever after remained two diſtinct governments, God not permitting him to attempt the recovery of his loſs: nay, by his wickedneſs, he had like to have brought more trouble upon himſelf, from the *Egyptians*, had not God, in his mercy, been pleaſed to accept of ſome condeſcentions, in conſideration of which, he did not utterly deſtoy him. And *Rehoboam* having reigned fifteen years over the kingdom of *Judah*, died, leaving the throne to his ſon *Abijah*.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

1. *The ſeveral changes in the kingdom of Iſrael, from king Jeroboam, to king Ahab.* 2. *The acts of the prophet Elijah.* 3. *The acts of the prophet Eliſha, with the terrible puniſhment of the wicked children.* 4. *Jehu is made king, and Jezebel ſlain.*

1. VARIOUS were the revolutions that afterwards followed in the kingdom of *Iſrael* which *Jeroboam* had founded: for he doing evil in the ſight of the LORD, and erecting altars to two golden calves, which he ſet up to divert the people, for political reaſons, from going to worſhip the LORD at *Jeruſalem*, the LORD was pleaſed to cut off all his houſe and family, by the hand of *Baaſha*; who alſo doing evil in the ſight of the LORD, the LORD deſtroyed all his houſe and family, by the hand of *Zimri*; who burning himſelf to death, to avoid the puniſhment due to his treaſon, *Omri* aſcended the throne, and after a reign of twenty-two years, died, and was ſucceeded by his ſon *Ahab*, who was a greater idolater, and a wickeder man, than all that went before him: inſomuch that the great prophet *Elijah*, propheſied againſt him, and aſſured him, that there ſhould not be dew or rain in *Iſrael* for years to come, but according to his word.

2. *Elijah*

2. *Elijah*, after this, by the command of the LORD, hid himſelf by the brook *Cherith*, and the LORD cauſed the ravens to bring him bread and fleſh, both morning and evening. Afterwards, by the divine command, he went to a widow at *Zarephath*, whom he found gathering ſticks, in order to make a fire to dreſs a little meal, which, with a cruiſe of oil, was all the ſuſtenance ſhe had for herſelf and ſon; as ſhe told the prophet, when he deſired a little bread and water at her hands: but *Elijah* commanded her, notwithſtanding, to bring him a little cake; and promiſed her, that her barrel of meal, and cruiſe of oil, ſhould not fail, 'till GOD ſent rain upon the earth: which was accordingly fulfilled; and they all three were ſuſtained many days, by this ſmall pittance, which the good widow thought would hardly ſerve for one meal, for herſelf and ſon. But thus we ſee her charity rewarded, and in the like manner, GOD will not fail to increaſe the ſtock of thoſe, who are compaſſionate, and ready to help the needy.

The widow's ſon ſickening after this, and dying, the LORD was pleaſed, at the ſupplication of the prophet, to reſtore him to life, to the great joy of the poor widow, who, before that, was inconſolable for his loſs, and, in her agony of ſorrow, imputed his death to the preſence of *Elijah*. And in the third year after the great drought the LORD commanded *Elijah* to ſhew himſelf to *Ahab*, promiſing to ſend rain

rain upon the earth. *Ahab*, in the mean while, had cauſed ſearch to be made for *Elijah*, throughout *Iſrael*, to ſlay him, imputing to him the famine which then ſorely raged in *Samaria*; and as ſoon as he ſaw the prophet, he ſternly ſaid, *Art thou he that troubleth* Iſrael? *And he anſwered, I have not troubled* Iſrael, *but thou and thy father's houſe, in that you have forſaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou haſt followed* Baalim.

Elijah then, in order to convince *Ahab* of the folly of his idolatry, perſuaded him to aſſemble the four hundred and fifty prophets of *Baal*, and cauſe them to offer a ſacrifice to *Baal* of a bullock, cut in pieces, and he would do the ſame to the LORD, and the GOD who ſhould anſwer by fire from heaven on the ſacrifice, ſhould be acknowledged the only true GOD. *Baal*'s prieſts could not refuſe the trial, and called upon *Baal* from morning 'till evening, in the moſt violent tranſports of ſuperſtitious zeal, to no purpoſe: and *Elijah*, in his turn, having cauſed a trench to be made, and twelve barrels of water to be poured on the wood, and on the ſacrifice, 'till the trench was filled, he ſupplicated the ALMIGHTY to aſſert his power to the conviction of thoſe idolaters: and in the ſight of the king, and all the people, fire deſcended from heaven, *and conſumed the burnt ſacrifice, and the wood, and the ſtones, and the duſt, and licked up the water that was in the trench.*

And

And when all the people ſaw this, they fell on their faces, and they ſaid, The LORD *he is the God! The* LORD *he is the God! And* Elijah *ſaid unto them, take the prophets of* Baal, *let not one of them eſcape. And they took them, and* Elijah *brought them down to the brook* Kiſhon, *and ſlew them there. And* Elijah *ſaid unto* Ahab, *Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a ſound of abundance of rain:* which accordingly came to paſs. This great prophet, having miraculouſly, by the aſſiſtance of GOD, performed theſe, and many other great things to the glory of the ALMIGHTY, and having appointed *Eliſha* to ſucceed him as a prophet, according to the divine command, was at laſt taken up, in the preſence of *Eliſha*, by a chariot and horſes of fire, in a whirlwind to heaven.

3. And dropping his mantle from him, *Eliſha* took it up, and with it divided the waters of *Jordan*, and paſſed over dryſhod, as he had ſeen *Elijah* do before. After which, as he was going by *Bethel*, we are told that ſome little children came out of the city mocking him; the dreadful conſequence of which was, that GOD ſent bears to eat them up. And ſome ſuch curſe we may depend upon it, will always attend thoſe who jeſt at the aged or holy.

Now there came a certin woman unto Eliſha, *ſaying, thy ſ rvant my huſband is dead, and my creditor is come to take unto him, my two ſons to be bond-men. And* Eliſha *ſaid unto her, what*

what ſhall I do for thee? ——What haſt thou in the houſe? And ſhe ſaid, thine handmaid hath not any thing in the houſe, ſave a pot of oil. Then he commanded her to borrow a great number of veſſels of her neighbours, and pour out into theſe veſſels, 'till they were full; which ſhe did, and found ſo great a quantity, that ſhe ſold a part of it, for as much as ſatisfied her debts, and there was enough left to ſubſiſt her and her children. Thus did this prophet, go about doing ſeveral good actions, but one in particular I ſhall mention, as a warning againſt meanneſs, and avarice.

Naaman the *Syrian* general, who was a man of great valour, but a leper, hearing of *Eliſha*'s miracles, went, nobly attended, to his houſe, to ſeek a cure at his hands: whereupon *Eliſha* ſent him word by a ſervant, to waſh ſeven times in *Jordan*, and he ſhould be clean. *Naaman*, expecting to have ſeen *Eliſha* himſelf, and that he ſhould have been inſtantly cured by his prayers to GOD for him, went away in a great rage, ſaying, *Are not the rivers of* Damaſcus *of greater virtue than the waters of* Iſrael? But being perſuaded to comply with the prophet's advice, he went down to *Jordan*, and dipped himſelf ſeven times; and his fleſh came again, and he was clean: upon which he confeſſed, that there was no GOD in all the earth, but in *Iſrael*; and offered great preſents to *Eliſha*, who abſolutely refuſed them; and ſmote with *Naaman*'s leproſy his

ſervant

ſervant *Gehazi*, who clandeſtinely, in his maſter's name, obtained ſome preſents for himſelf.

Now after this, the king of *Syria* made war againſt *Iſrael*, of which *Eliſha* gave his country-men warning, ſo that they eſcaped his ſnares more than once, which incenſed the *Syrian* monarch to ſuch a degree, that finding to whom it was owing, and at the ſame time, that *Eliſha* was then within his reach, at a city called *Dothan*; he ſent a great army to beſiege the place, and take him priſoner. But the prophet praying to GOD, to deliver him from the power of his enemies, the attendants about him, immediately ſaw an innumerable multitude of horſemen and chariots all of fire, which incompaſſed him about, and the *Syrians* were ſtruck every man with blindneſs, in ſuch a manner, that *Eliſha* not only baffled their deſign, but led them out of their way into the midſt of *Samaria*, ſo that they were in the hands of the *Iſraelites*; but when the king would have killed them, the generous prophet would by no means allow it, but preparing meat and drink for them, let them return to their maſter. An example well worthy imitation, ſince we ſhould always treat thoſe kindly, whom we have in our power. However, the king of *Syria* was far from paying this noble action in kind, ſince he after took the advantage of a famine, to aſſault the *Iſraelites* again; and he beſieged the city, 'till the head of an aſs, through ſcarcity of proviſion,

viſion, was ſold for four-ſcore pieces of ſilver. Beſides that, people were driven to ſuch extremity, that they even eat their own children; which coming to the king of *Iſrael*'s ears, and remembring that when he had the *Syrians* in his power, *Eliſha* prevented his deſtroying them, he ſwore that his life ſhould pay for the misfortune he had brought on his country. But *Eliſha* was no way intimidated; on the contrary, he told the king, that before that time the next day, flour ſhould be ſo plenty in the city, as to be ſold for a few pence by the buſhel. But a lord, on whoſe hand the king leaned, derided this ſaying, to whom the prophet anſwered, *Thou ſhalt ſee it, but ſhalt not eat thereof*; and all this came to paſs: For GOD ALMIGHTY, during the duſk of the evening, deceiving the *Syrians* by a noiſe which they imagined they heard, of a number of horſemen and chariots about their camp, they roſe, and fled, leaving all their baggage, and proviſion behind them. And the *Iſraelites* afterwards ruſhing in great numbers out of the city gates, the unbelieving lord was trod to death in the crowd.

4. And *Ahab* having been ſlain by the *Syrians*, the LORD cauſed *Eliſha* to anoint *Jehu* for king of *Iſrael*, with a command to cut off all the houſe of *Ahab*. *Jehu* accordingly conſpired againſt his maſter king *Joram*, the ſon of *Ahab*; and having killed him, he entered *Iſrael* in triumph; and ſeeing the

wicked *Jezebel*, *Ahab*'s wife, at the palace window, who reproached him for his conſpiracy, he cauſed her to be thrown out of the window, and her blood was ſprinkled on the wall, and the dogs afterwards eat her body, all but her ſkull, and the palms of her hands, purſuant to the threatenings of the prophet, as a puniſhment for her wickedneſs, and the murder of one *Naboth*. After which, *Jehu* ſlew ſeventy of the ſons of *Ahab*, and all his relations and friends, and deſtroyed all the prieſts of *Baal*, having by a ſtratagem aſſembled them together; and by theſe acts of juſtice, had the kingdom aſſured to his poſterity of the fourth generation.

CHAP. XIX.

1. *The ſeveral changes in the kingdom of Judah, from the reign of king Abijah, to the reign of king Jehoram.* 2. *Athaliah.* 3. *The death of Jehoiada.* 4. *Amaziah, and his ſucceſſors.* 5. *Hezekiah's good reign.*

1. NOW it was in the eighteenth year of *Jeroboam*, king of *Iſrael*, that *Abijah* the ſon of *Rehoboam*, began to reign over the kingdom of *Judah*; and while he acted towards GOD and man, with righteouſneſs and juſtice, he flouriſhed exceedingly, baffling and getting the better of all his enemies; but turning to the errors of his father, he died, and was ſucceeded by *Aſſa*.

This

This *Aſſa* was a good prince, deſtroying all the idols, which *Abijah* his father had cauſed to be raiſed; and reſtored his people to the true worſhip, degrading even his own mother for her obſtinacy, in ſtill perſiſting to pray to thoſe graven images: he too was very ſucceſsful in every thing he undertook, 'till being ſeized with a diſorder in his feet, he died, as it ſhould ſeem, through his own folly, in rather having recourſe to the advice of phyſicians, than the immediate hand of GOD (who in thoſe days might be directly applied to) and he was buried in the ſepulchre of the kings of *Iſrael*.

And now *Jehoſhaphat* aſcended the throne, in every reſpect a moſt excellent governour; being for courage, wiſdom and piety, but little inferior to *David* himſelf. This prince overthrew the *Ammonites*, and the *Moabites*, who made war againſt him; but afterwards, unfortunately forming an alliance with a wicked prince, of the *Iſraelites*, by which he diſpleaſed GOD, he was cut off in the flower of his age, and his ſon *Jehoram* was declared his ſucceſſor.

This was one of the worſt kings that ever reigned in *Judah*, for though he lived but eight years after his acceſſion, he contrived to commit all the crimes of his fore-fathers, and *Elijah* propheſied againſt *Jehoram*, that GOD for his wickedneſs, ſhould ſtrike him with ſome dreadful diſeaſe; however, he went on in his evil courſe, 'till his bowels ruſhing out

of his belly, he died, after having ſeen his ſons butchered before his face, and all his wealth taken away, by the incurſions of the neighbouring nations. Neither did the *Jews* ſo much as mourn for him, or ſuffer his body to be buried in the tombs of their former kings.

2. *Ahaziah* was the next prince that aſſumed the ſceptre, being the only remaining ſon of *Jehoram*. Happy would it have been for him, had he taken warning by the dreadful fall of his father, but inſtead of that, he was ſo monſtrouſly corrupt, that God ſuffered him to reign but one year, he being ſlain in a battle againſt the *Iſraelites*, when *Athaliah*, his mother, a moſt wicked and abandoned woman, ſeizing that opportunity to gain the government for herſelf, roſe up in the city of *Jeruſalem*, and murdered every one of the royal family, excepting only her little grandſon, *Joaſh*; who was miraculouſly preſerved by his great aunt, the wife of *Jehoiada* the prieſt, and by them concealed in the temple no leſs than ſix years; 'till having got a ſufficient party over to the royal intereſt, they ventured to diſcloſe the young monarch, and the idolatrous and unnatural *Athaliah*, being ſlain, *Joaſh* was eſtabliſhed king over the *Jewiſh* nation.

3. *Joaſh* was but a child, being only ſeven years old, when he aſcended the throne; however his want of experience was ſufficiently remedied, by the wiſdom of *Jehoiada*, whoſe counſel he continued to follow

low for many years, after he was grown up; repairing the temple which *Athaliah*, and her faction, had greatly damaged, and doing ſeveral other works of religion and juſtice; but that valuable prieſt dying at length thro' age, *Joaſh* ſoon began to forget his pious leſſons, turning from the ways of truth, to bow before idols in groves and high places, which was a moſt abominable practice; the devil taking thoſe opportunities, to make unfortunate and blinded people pray to him; on this account then, God aſſiſted the *Syrians*, who with a meer handful of troops, overcame *Judah*; and the ungrateful *Joaſh*, having ordered *Zachariah*, the ſon of his old friend and preſerver, to be ſtoned to death, only for giving him good advice, he was himſelf in the end conſpired againſt, and for that very fact, was murdered in his bed; leaving his ſon *Amaziah*, to govern the people in his room.

4. While men continue virtuous, they are almoſt always ſucceſsful; and this was the caſe of *Amaziah*, a prince, who, for a long ſeries of years, went on in performing good and great actions, bleſſing his people, and puniſhing their enemies: 'till turning aſide, like ſo many others of his anceſtors, he alſo became the object of GOD's wrath, being ſlain in a battle; nor was *Uzziah* his ſon attended with a better fate; for after having exerciſed the regal power for a ſhort ſeaſon, he died, of that ſhocking and loathſome diſeaſe, called leproſy, being

ing ſucceeded in the kingdom by *Jotham*, a man who though he neither entered the temple, nor reſtrained the people as he ſhould have done, yet was nevertheleſs, on the account of his other virtues greatly favoured by the divine power.

Ahaz was the next monarch who wore the crown of *Judah*; but he in no ſort followed the ſteps of his predeceſſor, the ſon being as profligate in every reſpect, as the father was virtuous. He ſeems indeed to have exerciſed his authority, only to make his people ſin, by which means he brought many diſaſters upon himſelf and them; *Judah* being not only ſpoiled in his reign, by the king of *Syria*, but a great number of the people were alſo carried into captivity, by the *Iſraelites*, by whom they were afterwards let go, however, on account of their near relation-ſhip. Nor did all thoſe misfortunes in the leaſt, change the heart of the hardened *Jotham*, who went on 'till his death, in an uninterrupted courſe of vile actions, 'till GOD, in pity to the poor *Jews*, took him away, and ſubſtituted the virtuous *Hezekiah* in his ſtead.

5. Now the kingdom of *Judah* once more began to flouriſh. The true worſhip, ſo long aboliſhed, was quickly reſtored, and every thing under *Hezekiah* wore a chearful and holy face; when *Sennacherib* king of *Syria*, came againſt him with a numerous army. Nor was *Hezekiah* backward in preparing to oppoſe him, but chiefly truſted

ed in the hand of GOD, which he aſſured the people would preſerve them. Nor were they ſlow to believe this, in ſpite of ſeveral diſſuaſive and threatening meſſages, ſent to them by king *Sennacherib*. So the great prophet *Iſaiah* and the king praying to GOD in the night-time, he ſent an angel, totally to overthrow the *Aſſyrian* army, which was obliged to return from whence it came, with diſgrace and loſſes. *Hezekiah* grew great in riches and honour, being for grandeur and magnificence, another *Solomon* in *Jeruſalem*. Neither was he oppreſſed by GOD during his whole life-time, though he once offended him in the time of a fit of ſickneſs. And *Hezekiah* died, being buried in the chief ſepulchre, or tomb, belonging to the family of *David*. And all *Judah*, and the inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, mourned for him, while *Manaſſeh* his ſon reigned in his ſtead.

CHAP. XX.

Containing the joint hiſtory of the Kingdoms of Judah and Iſrael, to their captivity, with the rebuilding of the temple, and the return of the people from Babylon.

HISTORY informs us of no nation, that ever experienced ſuch frequent and viſible marks of GOD's favour and protection, as the *Jewiſh*; nor have we indeed any inſtance of a nation,

which ſo ſenſibly felt the marks of his reſentment: nor was this more than ſtrict juſtice, ſince when they went aſtray, they had neither ignorance, nor evil cuſtom, nor, in ſhort, any thing to plead in their own excuſe: yet did not GOD take advantage of their wickedneſs, to cruſh them all at once; on the contrary, he gave them ſuch frequent warnings, that if they had not been, as it were, blinded by their ſins, they might eaſily have ſhunned deſtruction; but though they ſaw their nation divided, though they ſaw their kings and people daily fall ſacrifices to their own unrighteouſneſs, they ſtill continued to go on from one degree of wickedneſs to another; 'till the evil which had been ſo frequently denounced againſt them came; and as the *Iſraelites*, of the two, were rather greater offenders, than the people of *Judah*, GOD in his juſtice, began with puniſhing them.

It was accordingly in the ſeventh year of *Hoſea*, king of *Iſrael*, that *Shalmanezer*, king of *Aſſyria*, came with a powerful army, and beſieged the capital city of *Samaria*. As GOD had already determined to deliver it into his hands, we may eaſily imagine, that any oppoſition made by the people was in vain; notwithſtanding which he permitted them to defend themſelves for three years, at the end of which term, *Shalmanezer* prevailed, and he carried away all the inhabitants of *Samaria*, captives; diſperſing them about in the

the different cities of his dominions.

Nor would the fate of *Judah* have been long delayed; for the ſucceſſors of the worthy prince *Hezekiah*, whom you have already heard of, were abominably wicked and idolatrous, had it not been for the excellent *Joſiah*, another King of that country, who was a pious prince, remarkably virtuous in every reſpect, and gained the eſteem and favour of GOD, ſo as to ſtop his hand for ſome years; 'till being taken off in a battle, which through an over-abundant courage he had engaged in, and thoſe who reigned after him, being equally criminal with any of their forefathers, GOD no longer forbore to ſtrike.

It was accordingly in the wicked reign of *Zedekiah*, that *Nebuchadnezzar* king of *Babylon*, came up againſt the city of *Jeruſalem*, which he burnt down to the ground, with the glorious temple of *Solomon*, which was built therein, and putting out the king's eyes, he made ſlaves of every man, woman, and child, which had not periſhed by the flames or the ſword.

And fourſcore years did the children of *Iſrael*, remain under the *Babyloniſh* captivity, mourning and ſuffering for their crimes; 'till *Cyrus the great* aſcending the throne, their return at that period, which was foretold by the prophet *Jeremiah*, came to paſs.

For *Cyrus* was not only a great, but good man, and having received great favours from the hand of GOD, he thought it was his

his duty to rebuild his temple, which by a viſion he learned to be ſituated in *Jeruſalem*, as in his beſt beloved city.

So king *Cyrus* ſent a number of the *Hebrews* into their native country, with all the neceſſary materials for the work; which being completed in a few years after, another monarch being ſeated on the *Perſian* throne, the *Jewiſh* people returned from their ſlavery, and once more ſettled themſelves in the *Land of Promiſe*.

CHAP. XXI.

The hiſtory of queen Eſther.

THERE is nothing I would ſo earneſtly recommend to all my little female readers, next to that attention, which they ſhould pay to thoſe parts of holy ſcripture more immediately relative to the ſubject of religion, than a frequent peruſal of the delightful hiſtory of *Eſther*.

Ahaſuerus, one of the moſt powerful monarchs of the eaſt, having put away *Vaſhti* his queen, for her proud and contemptuous behaviour; this *Jewiſh* virgin was raiſed to his bed and throne, by the excellence of her beauty; but ſhe preſerved her ſtation there, by her humility, gratitude, and diſcretion.

For *Mordecai* her father's nephew, being a captive taken

taken at the time of the *Babyloniſh* invaſion, lived in the royal palace: now this *Mordecai* had not only been the inſtrument of preferring *Eſther*, but after the death of her father and mother, bred her up as his own child. The queen therefore was grateful for this; and though her kinſman was become her inferior, ſhe ſtill continued to treat him with the utmoſt reſpect and deference.

Mordecai's ſtation, was that of *ſitting in the king's gate:* and it ſo happened, that he had one time the good fortune to get the knowledge of a conſpiracy that was hatching againſt the life of *Ahaſuerus*; this he diſcovered, and the traitors were hanged: however, *Mordecai*'s loyalty remained unrewarded, 'till *Haman*, a proud and imperious man, who had greatly riſen in the king's favour, upon ſome diſreſpect, which he imagined this *Jewiſh* ſlave ſhewed his perſon, determined not only to make away with him, but, for his ſake, to deſtroy all that unhappy nation, of which there were great numbers ſcattered up and down in the ſeveral provinces. And accordingly obtained the king's mandate, for putting this bloody purpoſe into execution.

This, as we may imagine, threw the poor *Jews* into the utmoſt conſternation. But as for *Mordecai*, who knew from whence the evil ſprung, he abandoned himſelf to the moſt extreme ſorrow; nor could queen *Eſther* by any means comfort him, 'till hearing the cauſe of his diſtreſs, ſhe herſelf

herſelf became a partner in it.

And there was now a very little time, 'till the final ſtroke was to be ſtruck, when the queen, by *Mordecai*'s direction, threw herſelf at the king's feet, intreating, that he with his favourite *Haman*, would honour her with their preſence at a banquet. And the king, in conſequence of her invitation, being come, he demanded what favour ſhe would require, but ſhe ſaid, all her deſire was, that he and *Haman*, would viſit her again the next day.

A mark of diſtinction like this, ſet that proud man, almoſt beſide himſelf; but *Mordecai*, ſtill was a bar to his happineſs; and as he could not bear the ſight of him, he thought he might now venture to take him off, without any further ceremony; ſo he cauſed a gallows to be raiſed, on which he reſolved to hang him, as ſoon as he returned from the queen's next banquet, had not GOD given a turn to affairs, and cauſed the wicked *Haman* to periſh by that very inſtrument, which he prepared for the deſtruction of the innocent.

King *Ahaſuerus*, being reſtleſs in the night time, ordered the chronicle of his kingdom to be brought, and read to him; now it ſo fell out, that in this very book *Mordecai*'s diſcovery of the treaſon before-mentioned, was ſet down; and *Ahaſuerus* aſking what reward he had received, was anſwered none; upon which calling *Haman*, he demanded, *What ſhould be done unto the man, whom*

the

the king delighted to honour. The favourite thinking that perſon could only be himſelf, replied, that he ſhould be dreſſed in the royal robes, crowned with the imperial diadem, and led thro' the ſtreet on the king's own horſe: then ſaid *Ahaſuerus*, make haſte and do all this to *Mordecai*. So *Haman* burnt with envy and vexation, while *Mordecai* triumphed in the face of the whole kingdom.

But this was not the only puniſhment which *Haman* was to receive for his villainy; for queen *Eſther* afterwards at the banquet, laying his wicked ſcheme open to the king, he was puniſhed by death; and for a great example, was hanged upon the gallows which he had deſigned for *Mordecai*. And the king took the ring from his finger, and gave it to *Mordecai*, who was advanced to his enemy's poſt, obtaining ſeveral privileges for his enſlaved countrymen. And after this, *Eſther* lived a long and happy life, being a fit pattern for all her ſex, who ſhall be raiſed to any extraordinary ſtation, to ſhew them that grandeur is nothing without modeſty; or beauty without virtue.

CHAP. XXII.

The hiſtory of Job.

AMONG all the books written by *Moſes*, there is none more juſtly admired than that of

of *Job*; which contains such a rare example of patience, and dependance on the will of GOD, as calls for all peoples imitation.

Job was a man of the land of *Uz*, and for riches, happiness, and virtue, there was none like him to be found any where. For he had eleven thousand head of different sorts of cattle; he had ten children; and GOD held him in particular esteem. Now the host of heaven, at a stated season, appearing before the throne of GOD ALMIGHTY, the devil had the presumption to thrust himself in among them. And GOD pointed out *Job* to him, as a perfect and upright man, whom he could not pervert by all his temptation. But the devil said, 'Is *Job* good for nought? 'have you not blest him 'with every thing, he 'well may serve you; but 'take away his substance, 'and instead of blessing 'him, afflict him, and he 'shall curse you to your 'face.' So GOD gave Satan power to try *Job*, and the first thing this evil-spirit undertook, was to deprive him of all his cattle, which he did, by setting the *Sabeans* to kill his oxen, and by sending fire from the clouds, he consumed his sheep and servants; he afterwards brought the *Chaldeans*, who took his camels and asses; and at last he blew down a house where his sons and daughters were feasting, and they were all buried under the ruins. But to all this, *Job* only answered, *naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked I shall return thither, the Lord giveth, and*

and the Lord taketh away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord.

So the devil appeared before GOD a ſecond time, and GOD again pointed out *Job* as a good man, who ſtill held faſt his integrity; but the devil cried, 'A 'man's life is precious, 'and while that is ſafe, 'he values not any thing, 'but put forth your hand 'now, and afflict *Job*'s bo-'dy he ſhall curſe you 'to your face.' Then GOD gave the devil power to try *Job* farther. And this belliſh agent ſmote *Job* with ſore boils from the crown of his head, to the ſole of his foot; *Job* then ſat down in the aſhes, when his wife, enraged bid him *curſe God and die*; but he replied, *thou ſpeakeſt like a fooliſh woman; ſhall we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive evil.* But all this time *Job* ſinned not, only mourning with his friends, who hearing of his unfortunate change of life, came to viſit him.

Now their ſeveral excellent diſcourſes, the moſt divine that ever were penned, are noted at large in the Bible; but as in this place, I only pretend to give the hiſtory of a man ſo renowned for his patience; I ſhall add nothing farther here, than that after, as the ſevereſt trial of his virtue, he had been reduced to the utmoſt pitch of human miſery, in which he ſtill retained his faith in GOD's mercy, and his dependence and ſubmiſſion to his divine will, he was, by the gracious Creator, reinſtated in all his former poſſeſſions; nay he was made

made more rich and powerful in every reſpect, than ever he was before; and after enjoying all wordly happineſs, for a great number of years, he at laſt died, leaving behind him a numerous family, which he ſaw even to the fourth generation.

CHAP. XXIII.

The hiſtory of Daniel.

DANIEL was a great prophet, during the time of the *Jewiſh* captivity; the moſt remarkable parts of his life and actions, I ſhall therefore ſet down, as I find them written in that book of the holy ſcriptures, which is diſtinguiſhed by his name.

Nebuchadnezzar king of *Babylon*, having ſelected a few particular young men of the *Jewiſh* nation, to be educated for his ſervice, among thoſe was *Daniel*; and the king ordered that they ſhould be fed with coſtly meats and rich wines, ſo as to look fair and chearful in his preſence; but *Daniel* and three of his companions, would not defile themſelves with ſuch heatheniſh luxury, they therefore beſought their governor, that he would ſuffer them rather to feed on pulſe and water, and he through much intreaty conſenting, when they came before the king, notwithſtanding their poor diet, they looked better than

than any of the other *Hebrews*, who had feaſted upon ſo many delicacies.

Such was GOD's bounty to thoſe wiſe children, who were not beſotted to their bellies, or greedy of good things, as they are very wrongfully called, than which a more wicked and beaſtly vice cannot be; beſides that, it fills us with ill humours, both of body and mind, rendering us odious to GOD and man.

Now king *Nebuchadnezzar* had a dream, which left a dread upon his mind, but the ſubſtance and matter of it he had forgot: ſo he called all his magicians and wiſe men together, (people who pretended to interpret thoſe things) commanding them to tell him what his dream was, and the ſignification of it; but they confeſſed their inability to do any ſuch thing, if his majeſty would tell them his dream, they ſaid, they would interpret it; this enraged the king, he therefore ſent out his guards to kill and deſtroy all the magicians in *Babylon*, which would have been inſtantly executed, had not *Daniel* interpoſed, and praying to GOD, who in the night-time, diſcovered the king's dream to him, he preſented himſelf before *Nebuchadnezzar*, giving a full account, and interpretation of it; which was ſo ſatisfactory, that the king raiſed *Daniel* to be as great as his three friends, *Shadrach*, *Meſhach*, and *Abednego*; who were rulers over provinces.

But who would depend upon the favour of a wicked prince? Some time after,

this, *Nebuchadnezzar* erected a golden image, which he commanded all the people at a certain ſound of inſtruments, to fall down and worſhip.

Shadrach, *Meſhach*, and *Abed-nego*, only refuſed, which being carried to the king's ears, he ordered them to be caſt into a burning fiery furnace, bound together; and theſe three men were taken; however, they told the king, they feared him not, for GOD would deliver them out of his hands. He then commanded in a paſſion that the furnace ſhould be heated ſeven times hotter than at other times, and that it ſhould be encompaſſed with the choiceſt of his troops, which were all conſumed by a violent eruption of the flames. So *Shadrach*, *Meſhach*, and *Abed-nego*, were thrown into the fire, bound together; and as it ſhould ſeem *Nebuchadnezzar* himſelf was by, for ſtarting up, he cried immediately after, that he ſaw three men walking in the midſt of the furnace, with a fourth like an angel, along with them; then he came near, and called, *Shadrach*, *Meſhach*, and *Abed-nego*, ye ſervants of the moſt high GOD, come forth. And the three *Jews*, came forth before all the people; nor was a hair of their heads ſinged, or even ſo much as a ſmell of the fire upon their cloaths. Upon this the king turned to the only true and powerful GOD, and he exalted the men, whom GOD had ſo miraculouſly preſerved, to a very high ſtation. Notwithſtanding, he afterwards left his ways, 'till being

being made ſenſible by a ſevere malady the loſs of his ſenſes, in which he eat graſs like an ox; he repented again, and died a juſt and pious prince.

Now he was ſucceeded by *Belſhazzar*, who being at a feaſt once with his wives and princes, had the impiety to order the veſſels belonging to the temple of *Jeruſalem*, which had been taken from thence by *Nebuchadnezzar*, to be brought for them to drink out of; but while he was perpetrating this wicked fact, he was ſtruck with a dreadful apparition of a hand, which appeared over againſt him, writing ſomething on the wall, the words none of his counſellors could interpret, but *Daniel* told him the meaning of them was, that he ſhould loſe his kingdom, which that very night came to paſs; for *Belſhazzar* was ſlain, and *Darius* king of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, ſeized on his throne. And this king was pleaſed highly to favour *Daniel*, 'till he having incurred his diſpleaſure, by praying to GOD, the king caſt him into a lion's den, where he remained a whole night, to the great inward diſquiet of *Darius*, who went the next morning, and there miraculouſly found him alive; ſo he honoured *Daniel*, who for many years lived the leading man of the kingdom; even to the reign of *Cyrus the Great*.

End of the Old Teſtament.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE Chriſtian Religion.

Queſtion.

WHAT ſure ground have we to build our religion upon?

Anſwer. The word of GOD, contained in the ſcriptures.

Q. *What is the firſt point of religion, you are to learn out of God's word?*

A. The nature of God.

Q. *What is God?*

A. God is a ſpirit, moſt perfect, moſt wiſe, Almighty and moſt holy.

Q. *What mean you by calling God a Spirit?*

A. That God hath no body at all, and therefore muſt not be thought to be like unto any thing, which may be ſeen by the eye of man.

Q. *Are there any more Gods than one?*

A. No: there is only one God: though in that one Godhead, there be three perſons.

Q. *Which is the firſt of theſe perſons?*

A. The

A. The Father, who begetteth the Son.

Q. *Which is the ſecond?*

A. The Son, begotten of the Father.

Q. *Which is the third?*

A. The Holy Ghoſt, proceeding from the Father and the Son.

Q. *Which are the principal creatures?*

A. Angels and men.

Q. *What is the nature of angels?*

A. They are wholly ſpiritual, having no body at all.

Q. *What is the nature of man?*

A. Man conſiſteth of two diverſe parts; a body and a ſoul.

Q. *What is the body?*

A. The outward and earthly part of man; made at the beginning, of the duſt of the earth.

Q. *What is the ſoul?*

A. The inward and ſpiritual part of man; which is immortal, and never can die.

Q. *How did God make man at the beginning?*

A. According to his own likeneſs and image.

Q. *Wherein was the image of God principally ſeen?*

A. In the perfection of the underſtanding; and the freedom and holineſs of the will.

Q. *How many of mankind were created at the beginning?*

A. Two; *Adam* the man, and *Eve* the woman; from both whom, all mankind did afterward proceed.

Q. *What befel unto the angels after their creation?*

A. Some continued in the holy eſtate wherein they were created, ſome

of them fell, and became devils.

Q. *May the good angels fall hereafter?*

A. No: but they ſhall always continue in their holineſs and happineſs.

Q. *Shall the wicked Angels ever recover their firſt eſtate?*

A. They ſhall not: but be tormented in hell world without end.

Q. *How did God deal with man, after he made him?*

A. He made a covenant or agreement with *Adam*, and in him with all mankind.

Q. *What was man bound to do by this covenant?*

A. To continue as holy, as GOD at the firſt made him; to keep all GOD's commandments, and never to break any of them.

Q. *What did God promiſe unto man, if he did thus keep his commandments?*

A. The continuance of his favour and everlaſting life.

Q. *What did God threaten unto man, if he did ſin and break his commandments?*

A. His dreadful curſe, and everlaſting death.

Q. *Did man continue in that obedience which he did owe unto God?*

A. No: For *Adam* and *Eve*, obeying rather the perſuaſion of the devil, than the commandment of GOD, did eat of the forbidden fruit, and ſo fell away from GOD.

Q. *Was this the ſin of* Adam *and* Eve *alone; or are we alſo guilty of the ſame?*

A. All we, that are their children, are guilty of the ſame

ſame ſin: for we all ſinned in them.

Q. *What are the fruits that proceed from this natural corruption?*

A. Actual ſins; whereby we break the commandments of GOD in the whole courſe of our life.

Q. *How do we thus break God's commandments?*

A. In thought, word, and deed: not doing that which we ought to do, and doing that which we ought not to do.

Q. *What puniſhment is mankind ſubject unto, by reaſon of original and actual ſin?*

A. He is ſubject to all the plagues of GOD in this life; and endleſs torments in hell after this life.

Q. *Did God leave man in this woful ſtate?*

A. No: but of his free and unreſerved mercy, entered into a new covenant with mankind.

Q. *What is offered unto man in this new covenant?*

A. Grace and life everlaſting, is freely offered by GOD, unto all that ſhall be made partakers of his Son *Jeſus Chriſt*; who alone is mediator betwixt GOD and man.

Q. *What are you to conſider in Chriſt the mediator of this covenant?*

A. Two things: his *nature* and his *office*.

Q. *How many natures be there in Chriſt?*

A. Two: the Godhead, and the manhood, joined together in one perſon; which is no other but the ſecond perſon of the Trinity.

Q. *What is the* office *of Chriſt?*

A. To be a mediator betwixt *God* and man.

Q. *What was required of Chriſt for making peace and reconciliation betwixt* God *and* Man?

A. That he ſhould ſatisfy the firſt covenant whereunto man was tied.

Q. *Wherein was Chriſt to make ſatisfaction to the firſt covenant?*

A. In performing that righteouſneſs which the law of God did require of man: and in bearing the puniſhment which was due unto man, for breaking of the ſame law.

Q. *How did Chriſt perform that righteouſneſs, which God's law requireth of man?*

A. In that he was conceived by the Holy Ghoſt, without all ſpot of original corruption; and lived moſt holy all the days of his life, without all actual ſin.

Q. *How did he bear the puniſhment, which was due unto man, for breaking God's law?*

A. In that he willingly for man's ſake, made himſelf ſubject to the courſe of the law, both in body and ſoul: and humbling himſelf even unto the death, offered up unto his Father, a perfect ſacrifice for the ſins of the world.

Q. *What is required of man, for obtaining the benefits of the goſpel?*

A. That he receive Chriſt Jeſus, whom God doth freely offer unto him.

Q. *By what means are you to receive Chriſt?*

A. By faith whereby I believe the gracious promiſes of the goſpel.

Q. *What*

Q. *What is the firſt main benefit which we do get by thus receiving Chriſt?*

A. Juſtification, whereby, in Chriſt we receive the forgiveneſs of our ſins, and are accounted righteous: being by that means, freed from the guilt of ſin and condemnation, and eſtated in a new intereſt, unto everlaſting life.

Q. *What is repentance?*

A. Repentance is a gift of GOD, whereby a godly ſorrow is wrought in the heart of the faithful, for offending GOD their merciful father, by their former tranſgreſſions; together with a reſolution for the time to come, to forſake their former courſes, and to lead a new life.

Q. *What are the chief parts of God's law?*

A. That we love the LORD our GOD, with all our heart, with all our ſoul, and with all our mind.

Q. *How many commandments belong to this table?*

A. Four.

Q. *Which is the firſt commandment?*

A. I am the LORD thy GOD, which have brought thee out of the land of *Egypt*, out of the houſe of bondage. Thou ſhalt have no other gods before me.

Q. *What duty is enjoined in this commandment?*

A. That in all the inward powers and faculties of our ſouls, the true eternal GOD be entertained, and he only.

Q. *Which is the ſecond commandment?*

A. Thou ſhalt not make unto thee any graven image.

Q. *What duty is enjoined in this commandment?*

A. Tha

A. That all outward means of religious and ſolemn worſhip be given unto the ſame GOD alone; and not ſo much as the leaſt degree thereof (even the bowing of the body) be communicated to any image or repreſentation either of GOD, or of any thing elſe whatſoever.

Q. *Which is the third commandment?*

A. Thou ſhalt not take the name of the LORD thy GOD in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltleſs that takes his name in vain.

Q. *What is enjoined in this commandment?*

A. That in the ordinary courſe of our lives, we uſe the name of GOD (that is, his titles, words, works, judgments, and whatſoever he would have himſelf known by) with reverence and all holy reſpect; that in all things he may have his due glory given unto him.

Q. *Which is the fourth commandment?*

A. Remember the ſabbath day, to keep it holy, *&c.*

Q. *What doth this commandment require?*

A. That we keep holy the ſabbath-day; by reſting from the ordinary buſineſſes of this life, and beſtowing that leiſure upon the exerciſes of religion, both publick and private.

Q. *What is the ſum of the ſecond part of God's law?*

A. That we love our neighbours as ourſelves.

Q. *What commandments belong to this table?*

A. The ſix laſt.

Q. *Which is the fifth commandment?*

A. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days

days may be long in the land which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee.

Q. *What kinds of duties are preſcribed in this commandment, which is the firſt of the ſecond table?*

A. Such duties as are to be performed with a ſpecial reſpect to ſuperiors, inferiors, and equals: as namely, reverence to all ſuperiors, obedience to ſuch of them as are in authority; and whatſoever ſpecial duties concern the huſband and wife, parents and children, maſters and ſervants, magiſtrate and people, paſtors and flock, and ſuch like.

Q. *Which is the ſixth commandment?*

A. Thou ſhalt not kill.

Q. *What doth this commandment enjoin?*

A. The preſervation of the ſafety of mens perſons, with all means tending to the ſame.

Q. *Which is the ſeventh commandment?*

A. Thou ſhalt not commit adultery.

Q. *What is required in this commandment?*

A. The preſervation of the chaſtity of mens perſons: for the keeping whereof, wedlock is commanded unto them that ſtand in need thereof.

Q. *Which is the eighth commandment?*

A. Thou ſhalt not ſteal.

Q. *What things are ordered in this commandment?*

A. Whatſoever concerneth the goods of this life; in regard either of ourſelves, or of our neighbours.

Q. *How in regard of ourſelves.*

A. That we labour diligently in an honeſt and pro-

profitable calling; content ourſelves with the goods well gotten, and with liberality employ them to good uſes.

Q. *How in regard of our neighbours?*

A. That we uſe juſt dealing unto them in this reſpect, and uſe all good means that may tend to the furtherance of their eſtate.

Q. *Which is the ninth commandment?*

A. Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy neighbour.

Q. *What doth this commandment require?*

A. The uſing of truth in our dealing one with another; eſpecially to the preſervation of the good name of our neighbours.

Q. *Which is the tenth and laſt commandment?*

A. Thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbours houſe, thou ſhalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manſervant, nor his maid-ſervant, nor his ox, nor his aſs, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

Q. *What doth this commandment contain?*

A. It condemneth all wandring thoughts, that diſagree from the love which we owe unto our neighbours; although we never yield conſent thereunto.

Q. *What means doth God uſe to offer the benefits of the goſpel unto men, and to work and increaſe his graces in them?*

A. The outward miniſtry of the goſpel.

Q. *Where is this miniſtry executed?*

A. In the viſible churches of Chriſt.

Q. *What*

Q. *What do you call a viſible church?*

A. A company of men that live under the outward means of ſalvation.

Q. *What are the principal parts of this miniſtry?*

A. The adminiſtration of the word and ſacraments.

Q. *What is the word?*

A. That part of the outward miniſtry, which conſiſteth in the delivery of doctrine.

Q. *What is a ſacrament?*

A. A ſacrament is a viſible ſign, ordained by God to be a ſeal for confirmation of the promiſes of the goſpel unto the due receivers thereof.

Q. *Which are the ſacraments ordained by Chriſt in the new Teſtament?*

A. Baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper.

Q. *What is baptiſm?*

A. The ſacrament of our admiſſion into the Church; ſealing unto us our new birth, by the communion which we have with Chriſt Jeſus.

Q. *What doth the element of water in baptiſm repreſent unto us?*

A. The blood and ſpirit of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.

Q. *What doth the cleanſing of the body repreſent?*

A. The cleanſing of the ſoul by the forgiveneſs of ſins and imputation of righteouſneſs.

Q. *What doth the being under the water, and the freeing from it again, repreſent?*

A. Our dying unto ſin, by the force of Chriſt's death; and living again unto righteouſneſs, through his reſurrection.

Q. *What is the Lord's Supper?*

A. The

A. The ſacrament of our preſervation in the Church; ſealing unto us our ſpiritual nouriſhment and continual increaſe in Chriſt.

Q. *What do the elements of bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, repreſent unto us?*

A. The body and blood of Chriſt.

Q. *What doth the breaking of the bread, and pouring out the wine repreſent?*

A. The ſufferings whereby our Saviour was broken for our iniquities; the ſhedding of his precious blood, and pouring out of his ſoul unto death.

Q. *What doth the receiving of the bread and wine repreſent?*

A. The receiving of Chriſt by faith.

Q. *After the courſe of this life is ended; what ſhall be the ſtate of man in the world to come?*

A. Every one is to be judged, and rewarded according to the life which he hath led.

Q. *What is the ſtate of the ſoul of man, as ſoon as he departeth out of this life?*

A. The ſouls of God's children are preſently received into heaven, there to enjoy unſpeakable comforts; the ſouls of the wicked are ſent into hell, there to endure endleſs torments.

Q. *What call you the general judgment?*

A. That which Chriſt ſhall in a ſolemn manner, give upon all men at once; when he ſhall come at the laſt day with the glory of his Father, and all men, that ever have been from the

the beginning of the world until that day, ſhall appear together before him, both in body and ſoul, whether they be *quick* or *dead.*

Q. *How ſhall the* dead *appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt?*

A. The bodies which they had in their life-time, ſhall, by the almighty power of God, be reſtored again, and quickened with their ſouls: and ſo there ſhall be a general reſurrection from the dead.

Q. *How ſhall the* quick *appear?*

A. Such as then remain alive, ſhall be changed in the twinkling of an eye; which ſhall be to them inſtead of death.

Q. *What ſentence ſhall Chriſt pronounce upon the righteous?*

A. Come ye bleſſed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Q. *What ſentence ſhall he pronounce upon the wicked?*

A. Depart from me ye curſed, into everlaſting fire; which is prepared for the devil and his angels.

1. GREAT God, with wonder, and with praiſe
On all thy works I look;
But ſtill thy wiſdom, pow'r, and grace,
Shine brighter in thy book.
2. The ſtars that in their courſes roll,
Have much inſtruction given:
But thy good word informs my ſoul
How I may climb to Heaven.
3. The fields provide me food, and ſhew
The goodneſs of the Lord;
But fruits of life and glory grow
In thy moſt holy word.
4. Here are my choiceſt treaſures hid,
Here my beſt comfort lies:
Here my deſires are ſatisfy'd,
And hence my hopes ariſe.
5. Lord, make me underſtand thy law,
Shew what my faults have been;
And from thy goſpel let me draw
Pardon for all my ſin.
6. Here I would learn how Chriſt has dy'd
To ſave my ſoul from hell:
Not all the books on earth beſide
Such heav'nly wonders tell.
7. Then let me love my Bible more,
And take a freſh delight,
By day to read theſe wonders o'er,
And meditate by night.

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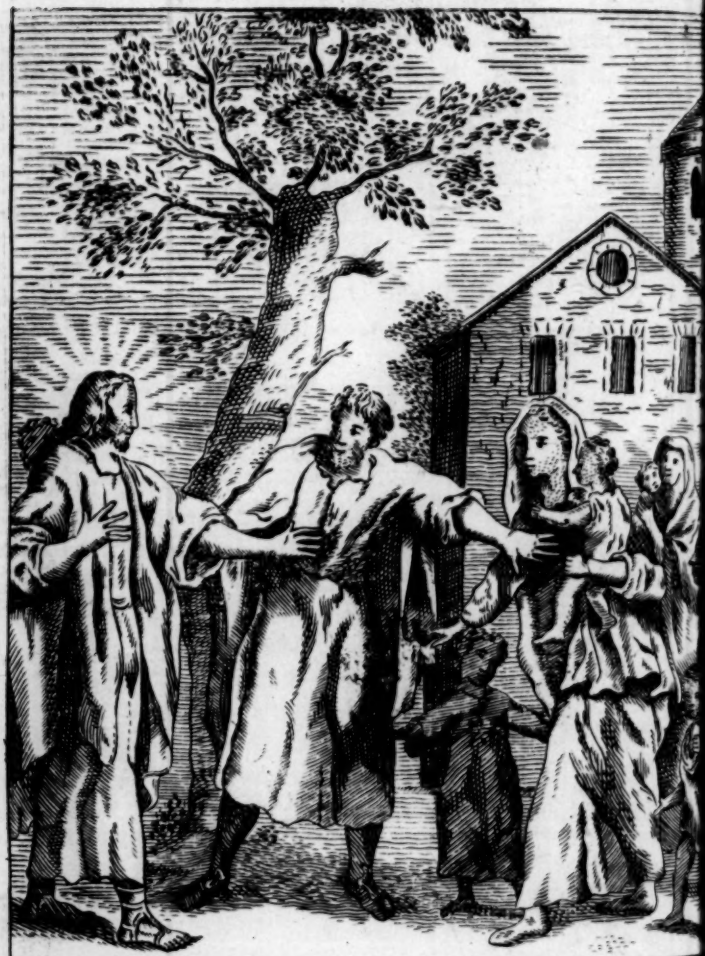

Suffer little Children to come unto me &c.

THE CHILDRENS BIBLE.

NEW TESTAMENT.

CHAPTER. I.

1. *The conception of John Baptiſt.* 2. *The ſalutation of the Virgin Mary.* 3. *The Birth of Chriſt.* 4. *The coming of the wiſe men.* 5. *The murder of the innocents.*

1. THE time foretold by the prophets for the appearance of GOD upon earth, in the perſon of the *Meſſiah*, beginning now to draw nigh, the holy Scripture gives us the following account of the conception of *John Baptiſt*, who was always pointed out as the perſon that ſhould come before him, under the character of *Elias*. While his father was executing his office, as one of the inferior prieſts in the temple of *Jeruſalem*, he was ſurpriſed at the appearance of an angel, who brought the joyful news, that GOD intended to bleſs him with a ſon, whoſe name ſhould be *John*, and whoſe appearance, in

the world, ſhould be a certain token of the near approach of *Chriſt*; but this, *Zacharias* was ſlow to believe, on account of his own great age, as well as his wife's long barrenneſs, and therefore deſired ſome miracle in confirmation of it; upon which the angel let him know that he was no leſs than *Gabriel*, a ſpecial attendant on GOD's throne; however, ſince he was weak enough to doubt of the truth of what he told him, he ſhould have a ſign, and one alſo, which ſhould be a puniſhment to him; accordingly, *Zacharias* immediately became both deaf and dumb, nor was he reſtored again to his ſight and hearing, 'till eight days after his ſon *John the Baptiſt* was born.

2. The *prophets* foretelling the birth of Chriſt, expreſsly declared that he ſhould be born of a pure virgin, and of the houſe and family of *David*; ſix months after the conception of *Elizabeth* therefore, the ſame angel *Gabriel* was ſent to *Nazareth*, a city of *Galilee*, to a virgin named *Mary* (a near relation of *Elizabeth*'s, and one of *David*'s direct deſcendants) who had lately been contracted in marriage to one *Joſeph*, of the ſame family indeed, but of no higher a profeſſion than that of a carpenter; and this virgin the angel began to congratulate on her good fortune, in being ſo highly favoured by GOD ALMIGHTY, as to be the perſon appointed by him, to bring forth the Saviour of the world, the long expected *Meſſiah*, whom ſhe ſhould call Jeſus,

Jeſus, and whoſe kingdom ſhould have no end.

Conſcious of her own innocence and virtue, yet ſurprized at this ſo extraordinary apparition, the holy virgin began to expoſtulate with the angel, telling him, that as yet ſhe had never cohabited with man, how then ſhould ſhe have a child; but the angel anſwered, that ſhe ſhould conceive by ſupernatural means; and, to ſhew her that nothing was impoſſible to the ALMIGHTY, he informed her, that her couſin *Elizabeth* was, notwithſtanding her former barrenneſs, and her old age, at that time ſix months gone with a boy. Whereupon the bleſſed *Mary* humbled herſelf before GOD, and as ſoon as the angel was departed, went to pay her couſin *Elizabeth* a viſit.

3. And here *Mary* continued for about the ſpace of three months, at the end of which time returning home, the ſigns of her pregnancy were quite viſible, ſo that her contracted huſband *Joſeph*, imagining ſhe had been unchaſte, was minded to give her a private releaſement from their intended marriage: but before he had time to put this deſign in execution, an angel from heaven appearing to him in a dream, intirely ſatisfied all his ſcruples; ſo *Joſeph* took the virgin home to his houſe; and the time of her deliverance being pretty near at hand, and *Bethlehem* being the place foretold by the *prophets* for *our Saviour*'s birth, that matter was brought to paſs in the following manner.

4. *Auguſtus Cæſar* (no doubt by the ſecret direction of GOD) iſſued a proclamation, commanding, that all the people under the Roman empire ſhould be taxed, according to their ſeveral eſtates and conditions. Now *Joſeph* and his wife *Mary* being both of the tribe of *Judah*, were, by virtue of this order, obliged to go to *Bethlehem*, the immediate city belonging to their tribe, and the great crowds of people having already taken up all the inn, when they arrived, they were obliged to go into a ſtable, not being able to find any other lodging. Here they had not been long, before the bleſſed Virgin was delivered of a ſon, whom ſhe wrapt in ſwaddling cloaths, and laid down to reſt in a manger.

But notwithſtanding that the birth of *our Saviour* was thus far obſcure, GOD was pleaſed the very ſame night to reveal it to ſome ſhepherds, who were watching their flocks in a neighbouring field, by the appearance of an angel; who had no ſooner pronounced the glad tidings, than an innumerable multitude of the heavenly hoſt appeared in the air, ſurrounded with moſt ſplendid glory, and they all broke out in that divine chorus, *Glory be to God on high; on earth peace; good-will towards men.*

And after this the ſhepherds, in conſequence of a ſign given them by the firſt Angel, went into the city, where they found *Mary* and her holy Infant; which laſt they worſhipped, and returned, praiſing God,

God, and extolling his mercies, to the great amazement of all thoſe that heard them.

As ſoon as the child was eight days old, his parents had him circumciſed at the temple of *Jeruſalem*, calling his name JESUS, according to the command of God; but as they were bringing him, to ſubmit himſelf to this part of his country's cuſtom, an old man, named *Simeon*, beholding him, began to praiſe God in an extacy of devotion, for that he had permitted him to ſee, before he died, that which ſhould ſave all mankind. Nor was the ſudden rapture of *Anna*, an aged widow, leſs extraordinary, who, alſo ſeeing him upon this occaſion in the temple, began to glorify God, with a prophetick ſpirit, and teſtified that the child was the true *Meſſiah*.

After theſe acts, *Joſeph* and *Mary* returning to *Bethlehem*, GOD thought proper to reveal the birth of his Son, not to the Jews only, but to other nations; and this he did by cauſing an uncommon ſtar to riſe in the Eaſt, which ſome learned men, in thoſe parts, obſerving, and underſtanding withal, that this was to ſignify the birth of the *Meſſiah* promiſed to the Jews, they travelled as far as *Jeruſalem*, making enquiries after this new born prince; which coming to *Herod*'s ears, (who reigned at that time tetrarch, or king of *Judea*, by the favour of the Roman Emperor) he ſent for them, and having communed for ſome time

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about the matter, he charged them, if they ſhould get any farther intelligence of it, that they ſhould return and bring him word. Now I muſt inform you, that *Chriſt* had always been foretold as one who ſhould appear in the character of a king, which the beſotted people never conſidered in its pure and ſpiritual light, ſo that *Herod* was afraid the *Meſſiah* would rob him of his kingdom; for which reaſon he reſolved, if poſſible, to deſtroy him.

But God, who ſees the hearts of men, and can prevent their evil intentions, put this out of his power; for the wiſe men, being ſtill conducted by the ſtar, at laſt came to the very place where our bleſſed Saviour was, and there offering ſeveral gifts, as to a God, and worſhipping him, they departed into their own country by another road.

Now when *Herod* found how he was ſet at nought and diſappointed, he roſe up in a great fury, and ſending for his officers, he ordered them to go into *Bethlehem*, and kill every child from two years old and under, by which expedient, he thought this dreaded rival could not eſcape; but here again he was baffled, for GOD ALMIGHTY fore-warning *Joſeph* in a dream, commanded him to take *Mary*, his wife, and her ſon, and fly into *Egypt*; which they did, time enough to eſcape the intended murder. Neither did they return again into *Judea*, till *Herod* was dead: and GOD, in order to fulfil a prophecy, *out of Egypt recalled his Son.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

1. *Chriſt goes with his parents to Jeruſalem.* 2. *Is baptized by John.* 3. *Is tempted by the devil.* 4. *Chriſt cleanſes the temple.* 5. *John Baptiſt impriſoned and beheaded.*

1. CHRIST being twelve years old, went up with his parents to *Jeruſalem*, at the time of the *paſſover*; who after having performed the uſual ceremonies of that *feaſt*, were again returning home with great numbers of their acquaintance, when at the end of the firſt day's journey, they miſſed their Son; it is impoſſible to expreſs their terror and anxiety upon this occaſion, but going back to *Jeruſalem*, with all the ſpeed they could, at the expiration of three days, they found him diſputing among the doctors in the temple; who were aſtoniſhed at the greatneſs of his underſtanding, thinking him a child of ordinary extraction. Oh! how beautiful it is, to ſee children well behaved and ſenſible, and how careful ought they to be to make themſelves ſo, ſeeing that ſuch a carriage is more admired in them, than in men of years and ſtature.

And from this time, to the thirtieth year of *our Saviour*'s life, in which he began to appear in character of the *Meſſiah*, the evangeliſts (thoſe of his diſciples who writ his hiſtory)

ſtory) are intirely ſilent with regard to him, ſave only that they ſay he grew in ſtature and in wiſdom; and, as the greateſt praiſe they could beſtow, that in all things he behaved himſelf dutifully, and reſpectfully towards his parents. And I beg, my dear children, that you will carry this in your mind; for if *Jeſus Chriſt*, who was GOD, and had power over all things, ſubmitted himſelf in that ſort to his own creatures, are not we to do ſo much more, who owe our lives to our parents, who are ſo much obliged in our infancy to their protection and aſſiſtance, when we cannot help ourſelves; ſurely this very circumſtance muſt be ſufficient to convince you, that GOD will puniſh undutiful children, with the utmoſt rigour of his juſtice.

2. I have already informed you, that *John Baptiſt* was ſent as the immediate forerunner of the *Meſſiah*; he had been bred up in the wilderneſs, led a pious and abſtemious life, and had now, for ſix months, been publickly preaching to and baptizing an innumerable multitude, that flocked about him on all ſides. When our bleſſed Saviour came to the river *Jordan*, among the reſt, deſiring that *John* would alſo baptize him, he knew who talked to him, and the exalted nature of the *Meſſiah* too well! But Chriſt convincing him of the fitneſs of the thing, at length his modeſty gave way, and Jeſus coming again out of the water, after having been baptized, the Heavens were miraculouſly opened, and the Holy Ghoſt

Ghoſt deſcending upon him like a dove, there was a voice heard from Heaven, which ſaid, *this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.*

3. After this, Chriſt was carried by the Spirit into the wilderneſs of *Judea*; where, after he had faſted forty days and forty nights, and was now very hungry, the devil appeared to him in a bodily ſhape, and began to tempt him.

But the holy Jeſus baffled all his cunning and wicked attacks, 'till at laſt, when the devil offered him all the glory and kingdoms of the earth, if he would fall down and worſhip him, Chriſt made anſwer, *thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.* Whereupon the devil left him for that time, and angels ſent from Heaven, came with refreſhments for him, after his glorious victory.

4. As ſoon as our Saviour came to *Jeruſalem*, the firſt thing he did, was to reform the publick abuſe of the temple, occaſioned by the ſhops which the money-changers had ſet up, and beaſts, which dealers therein had brought into the outward court; this our LORD could not ſuffer with patience, and therefore, with a ſcourge, made of cords, he drove all thoſe people out before him, overturning their tables, and commanding thoſe who ſold doves to depart; which ſo incenſed the *Jews*, that they came and demanded of him, by what authority he did thoſe things and to give them ſome evidence of a commiſſion for it; but to this he made

no

no other reply, than what immediately related to his future reſurrection from the dead: however, though he then refuſed to work any miracle, we find him ſoon after doing many, which ſurprized the whole city, and not only ſo, but had ſuch an effect, as to convince one *Nicodemus*, a conſiderable man among the *Jews*, of Chriſt's being really the Son of GOD, and coming to him privately by night, after ſome diſcourſe between them, he became one of his diſciples.

5. We ſhall now return to *John the Baptiſt*, who acted in ſuch a a publick manner, and converted ſuch a multitude of the people, that the *Jewiſh* doctors began to imagine that he was the *Meſſiah*, or at leaſt *Elias*, who, as they thought from a prophecy, which foretold, that that prophet ſhould come again upon earth before *the great, and terrible day of the Lord*, was to make his appearance before the *Meſſiah*; but *John* anſwered the meſſengers which they ſent to him upon this occaſion, that he was neither, but according to the words of the prophet *Malachi*, *the voice of one crying, in the wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord.* And *John* bore teſtimony to all people, of our LORD's being the true and expected *Meſſiah*; but in particular, as Chriſt was returning from the wilderneſs, where he had been tempted, *John* pointed him out to the multitude, as *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the ſins of the world*, to two of his own diſciples; alſo

alſo he gave the ſame teſtimony next day, in ſo much, that they left their old maſter, and followed Jeſus, as did ſeveral others; nor did *John* fail upon all occaſions to own the ſuperiority of *Jeſus Chriſt* over himſelf, who ſhould ſoon decline (he ſaid) even as the morning ſtar decreaſes before the light of the ſun.

Now *John* was at this time in the territories of *Herod Antipas*, the ſon of that *Herod* who murdered all the little children, and being of great freedom of ſpeech, and coming to *Herod*'s court, he reproved him ſo openly for living in adultery with his brother *Philip*'s wife, that the woman conceived an irreconcilable hatred towards him; nor did ſhe ever leave teazing the king, who otherwiſe reſpected and reverenced *John*, 'till ſhe prevailed upon him to throw him into priſon, with an intent to have him deſtroyed, whenever ſhe could find out a proper opportunity. And at laſt her malice was fully ſatisfied; for her daughter dancing at a feaſt before the king and his lords, ſome time after, *Herod* was ſo pleaſed with her performance, that he ſwore to grant whatever ſhe aſked; who being inſtructed by her mother, demanded the head of *John the Baptiſt*, and the king becauſe he had ſwore, would not deny her, though he complied with much reluctance; ſo the pious and holy *John*, thus fell a ſacrifice to the fury of a wicked woman, while his head was brought in a charger, to glut her revenge ſtill more.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

1. *Chriſt and the woman of Samaria.* 2. *Chriſt preacheth at Nazareth.* 3. *The miraculous draught of fiſhes.* 4. *The palſy-man.* 5. *The twelve apoſtles ſelected.* 6. *Chriſt dines at Simon's houſe.*

1. THE *Phariſees* were a ſet of people among the *Jews*, very abſtemious as it ſhould ſeem in their outward manner of living, being great obſervers of all ceremonies enjoined by the *Jewiſh* law, but in reality they were a pack of proud, hypocritical knaves; theſe therefore, when our LORD found beginning to grow envious of him in *Judea*, he determined to depart from thence, and to go over into *Galilee*; in this journey, it was neceſſary for him to paſs thro' *Samaria*, where he was no ſooner come, than being hot and faint with walking, he ſent his diſciples into the city to buy food, and ſat himſelf down by the ſide of a well. Here a woman ſhortly after came out to draw water, and Chriſt deſiring her to give him a draught, ſhe perceiving he was a *Jew*, took the liberty to aſk him, how he could make ſuch a requeſt to a *Samaritan*, with which people his nation had ſuch great quarrels, and ſo little dealings; but after a ſhort diſcourſe, in which Chriſt took occaſion from water, to talk to her of ſpiritual bleſſings, how

how was ſhe ſurprized when he began to tell her every circumſtance of her paſt ill-ſpent life (for ſhe had been a very lewd woman,) and at laſt, that he was the promiſed *Meſſiah*; ſhe immediately ran into the city, proclaiming aloud the perſon ſhe had met with, and the inhabitants then coming out, invited our LORD to paſs ſome time with them.

2. Well had it been for the city of *Nazareth*, had that behaved in a like grateful and complaiſant manner to him; but when he went there, as to the place of his education, very widely different was their conduct. Our LORD went into the *Synagogue* (the *Jewiſh Synagogues* were ſomewhat in the nature of our churches, where the Bible was read to the people) on the *Sabbath Day*, and ſtanding up to read, as any perſon had a right to do, he began at a paſſage in *Iſaiah*, in theſe words, *the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the Goſpel to the poor*, which he applied to himſelf in the moſt graceful and eloquent manner; but his hearers calling to mind his low birth, and education, though many of them could not help being charmed with his diſcourſe, began to deſpiſe him; which he perceiving, and upbraiding them for their ingratitude, the whole aſſembly roſe up, and hurrying him out of the city, brought him to the brow of a hill, with a deſign to have caſt him headlong down, had he not miraculouſly conveyed himſelf out of their ſight.

3. After

3. After this, Chriſt taking up his reſidence at the city of *Capernaum*, he had not long been there, before great multitudes flocked unto him; and walking one day by the ſide of a neighbouring lake, he got into a ſhip, deſiring the maſter of it, a fiſherman, to put a little from ſhore, that he might teach the people. Now *Peter*, for it was to him whom Chriſt ſpoke, with his companions, *James*, *John*, and *Andrew*, all afterwards the apoſtles of our LORD, had been hard at work all night fiſhing, but without any ſucceſs. When his diſcourſe was ended, therefore, Jeſus ordered them to launch out a little farther, and let down their nets for a draught; this in obedience to him they did, nor had they any cauſe to repent it, for they inſtantly incloſed ſuch a multitude of fiſhes, that their tackle began to break, and they were obliged to call ſome others of their profeſſion, to come to their aſſiſtance.

4. This miracle could not fail of convincing the men of our Saviour's divinity; they followed him, therefore, into the city, where in a little time after, being in a houſe with many great perſons, brought together by their curioſity to hear him, four people came bearing a man ſick of the palſy on his bed, but finding it impoſſible to paſs through the crowd, they uncovered the roof of the houſe, and let down the ſick man, bed and all, into the very room where Chriſt was ſitting; he was inſtantly determined to cure

cure the man, but firſt told him, that his ſins were forgiven him; which expreſſion the people about him, looking upon as blaſphemous, he reproved their evil thoughts, and then by curing the patient before him immediately demonſtrated his power to forgive ſins: which ſo thoroughly convinced, and amazed them, that they all began to glorify GOD, declaring, that the like had never been ſeen in *Iſrael* till that day.

5. Many of the unbelieving *Jews*, ſtill continuing to contrive our LORD's deſtruction, he retired to a ſolitary mountain, where he continued all night in prayer, intending the next morning to make an election of ſome particular perſons, from among the multitude of his diſciples, who ſhould be witneſſes to all mankind, of his words and actions, and after his return to Heaven, preach the Goſpel to all the inhabitants of this world. The names of the men he choſe, and who were diſtinguiſhed by the title of apoſtles, were as follows, *Peter*, *Andrew*, *James the great*, *James the leſs*, *John*, *Philip*, *Bartholomew*, *Matthew*, *Thomas*, *Simon*, *Judas* the brother of *James*, and *Judas Iſcariot*, who afterwards betrayed him. And as he perceived the multitude gathering round him, theſe he called nearer than the reſt, and began that moſt excellent diſcourſe, which lays down all the great principles of the Chriſtian Religion, and is called his Sermon on the Mount.

6. Chriſt had been now preaching for a conſiderable

able time, to a very large aſſembly, when cloſing with that comfortable invitation, *come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden and I will give you reſt*, a certain rich *Phariſee* named *Simon*, came and aſked him to dinner; but while he was at table, there happened an incident ſomewhat extraordinary. For a certain woman, who not long before, had been remarked for her lewdneſs, came in, and falling at his feet, waſhed them with the tears which flowed from her eyes, and then having wiped them with her hair, ſhe kiſſed them, and anointed them with a very precious ointment. *Simon* thought, this was in Jeſus, a thing unbecoming, to ſuffer a bad woman to behave in ſuch a manner with regard to him; but our Saviour who knew his thoughts, in a beautiful parable defended the woman, and in return for her kindneſs, told her all her ſins, were pardoned, which ſome of the company ſeemed to reſent as an affront to the Divine Majeſty, but that gave Chriſt no manner of uneaſineſs.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

1. *The miracle of the loaves.* 2. *Chriſt walks upon the water.* 3. *His transfiguration.* 4. *His advice to his apoſtles.* 5. *His behaviour at Jeruſalem.*

JESUS had juſt now received the news of *John the Baptiſt*'s death, by the report of ſome of his diſciples, when his own apoſtles returned from an expedition, which he had lately ſent them upon, in order to preach the goſpel in all the neighbouring cities. And the fame of our Saviour and his miracles were ſo great, that *Herod* began to imagine that *John*, whom he had beheaded, was come to life again, to revenge his blood upon him; Chriſt therefore, knowing the cruelty of that prince, took ſhipping with a deſign to retire for a while to a deſert near *Bethſaida*; but in vain was it for him to think of concealing himſelf, the people ſeeing where he went aboard, followed him round by land, and were got to the deſert almoſt as ſoon as he, which inſtance of their zeal, ſo affected his compaſſion, that he immediately aſcended a mountain, and taking his diſciples with him, he there firſt inſtructed them in ſeveral things concerning the kingdom of GOD; and having afterwards cured their ſick, he at laſt fed them all to the number of five thouſand

men, beſides women and children, with five barley loaves, and two ſmall fiſhes, and that with ſo extraordinary a plenty, that no leſs than 12 baſkets, were taken up of the broken meat.

This miracle had ſuch an effect upon the people, that they no longer doubted of his being the *Meſſiah*, and were going to ſet him up for their king, by main force; but he knowing the miſchief of ſuch a deſign, conſtrained his diſciples immediately to take ſhipping, in order to go to *Capernaum*, while himſelf ſtayed behind to diſmiſs the multitude; which being done, he continued 'till midnight in meditation and prayer.

2. In the mean time, the veſſel where the apoſtles were on board, was toſſed by a great ſtorm on the middle of the lake, and when morning appeared, they had hardly got a league on their voyage; at which time, our Saviour came walking upon the ſurface of the ſea, and drew near the ſhip. This ſtrange appearance increaſed their fear not a little; but Chriſt calling out, told them who he was, when *Peter*, by his permiſſion, getting out of the ſhip to meet him, began to ſink; our LORD then blamed the weakneſs of his faith, and reaching out his hand, ſet him firmly on the top of the waters, and walked with him to the ſhip, where they were no ſooner entered, than the whole company fell down and worſhipped Chriſt, and it was not long before they arrived in their deſired harbour.

3. A few days after this, after talking for ſome

ſome time to his apoſtles of his future ſufferings, our LORD to revive their hearts, which he obſerved much caſt down upon this occaſion, thought it not improper to give ſome of them at leaſt a ſpecimen of his future glory; and accordingly, taking with him *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, he aſcended an high mountain, and there while he was employed in prayer, he was ſuddenly tranſformed into another appearance; for a bright luſtre darted from his face, more glorious than the ſun, and a dazzling ſplendour piercing from his body, thro' his garments, made them appear whiter than ſnow; during this heavenly ſcene, *Moſes* and *Elias* ſtood talking familiarly with him, and diſcourſing of his death and ſufferings.

The apoſtles during the continuation of this fell aſleep, but waking before the glory again diſappeared, they were ſuddenly covered with a bright cloud, and a voice came from heaven, ſaying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed, hear ye him.* Upon which the apoſtles were ſeized with greater conſternation than ever, and fell proſtrate on the earth, 'till our LORD encouraging them they looked up, and ſaw no one but himſelf; and as they deſcended the mountain, he charged them to keep the things they had ſeen ſecret, *until he was riſen from the dead.*

4. From the mount of transfiguration, our LORD

proceeded on his journey, through the other parts of *Galilee*, towards *Capernaum*; and as they were on their way, he acquainted his apoſtles the ſecond time with his approaching death and reſurrection; but they were ſo full of the hopes of an earthly kingdom, that they found it very difficult to believe, or conceive what he meant, and afterwards they began to diſpute among themſelves, about who ſhould have the firſt place of dignity, when Chriſt ſat upon his throne. This our Saviour knew, and to give an effectual check to their ambition, he firſt informed them, that the only way for any man to become great in his kingdom, was to be lowly in his own eſteem; and then calling a little child, and ſetting him in the midſt of them, he propoſed him as a pattern of meekneſs and humility; recommended ſuch children, and in them all humble-minded chriſtians, to the favour of mankind; cautioned them againſt doing any injury, or giving any offence to ſuch, becauſe of their guardian angels, and to remove the occaſion of all ſuch offences, exhorted them to mortify all their carnal affections.

And ſhall children be unmindful of this honour done them, by the GOD of heaven and earth? and ſhall they not take care, leſt by ſtubbornneſs, peeviſhneſs, lying, ill language, or any other offence, they forfeit his eſteem? ſurely they would do ſo, if they conſidered, that they have continually an angel watching

ing over their actions, which, was not GOD a witneſs of them himſelf, would not fail to give him conſtant intelligence thereof.

5. But about this time, the feaſt of tabernacles drawing near, Chriſt prepared to go with his diſciples to *Jeruſalem*, where for ſome days after his arrival, he did not appear publickly, to the no ſmall vexation of the inhabitants, many of whom had never ſeen him; but at length, when every one began to deſpair, about the middle of the feaſt, he ſhewed himſelf, teaching in the temple, and all places of publick reſort, to the great admiration of the *Jews*. Thoſe indeed who knew the hatred, which the ruling part of the nation had conceived againſt him, admired to hear him ſpeak with ſuch freedom; and in the concluſion, officers were ſent by the government to apprehend him; but they were ſo taken with his perſon and preaching, that they became his diſciples, inſtead of executing the orders of their ſuperiors; which ſo incenſed the council that they would immediately have ſeized and impriſoned him, had not one of their own number, *Nicodemus*, who was ſecretly a diſciple of *Chriſt*'s, roſe up and ſpoke in his juſtification; ſo they diſſolved the aſſembly, and proceeded no farther againſt him, for that time; while our Saviour continued to perform many miracles, and preach the word of God with the utmoſt boldneſs, during the reſt of his ſtay at *Jeruſalem*.

CHAP. V.

1. *Mary and Martha.* 2. *Chriſt's admirable doctrine.* 3. *He receives the children.* 4. *Lazarus raiſed from the dead.*

1. THERE was a very extraordinary diſeaſe, almoſt peculiar to the *Jewiſh* nation, of which at this day we can have no notion, only that we may be ſure, people were formerly afflicted with it, ſince the Scripture poſitively aſſerts it over and over again; the diſeaſe I mean was poſſeſſion, or that power which GOD permitted the devil of entering and tormenting the bodies of particular men and women; but has long ſince been taken from him, *Chriſt*'s ſufferings having totally aboliſhed Satan's reign. *Mary Magdalene*, a beautiful widow, of diſtinction among the *Jews*, was one of theſe unfortunate ſufferers: we are told indeed, that our LORD, caſt no leſs than ſeven devils out of her, and whereas, ſhe had before led a very looſe life, ſhe from that time became a moſt glorious example of virtue and piety; and followed our Saviour during his whole miniſtry, with the utmoſt tenderneſs, adoration, and devotion.

A conduct like this towards one of ſo ſweet and generous a diſpoſition, could not fail of endearing her whole family to him, and

and after his departure from *Jeruſalem*, we find him at the houſe of *Martha*, *Mary*'s elder ſiſter, who lived about two miles from that city, in a ſmall village called *Bethany*; but while *Martha* was buſy, in making preparation for his entertainment, her ſiſter *Mary* ſat with the company liſtening to his inſtructions: and when *Martha* complained to him, that her ſiſter had left the whole burthen of the buſineſs upon her, and thereupon deſired him to ſend her to her aſſiſtance, our LORD commended *Mary*'s choice, and though he did not ſlight *Martha*'s civility, preferred her ſiſter's attention to his doctrine before it.

2. Upon his return to *Galilee*, as he was one day praying with his diſciples, in a private place, they humbly beſought him to compoſe a form of prayer for their uſe; whereupon he gave that excellent form called the LORD's prayer; and not only ſo, but encouraged and exhorted them to be conſtant in their petitions to the Divine Majeſty; who, as a father, infinitely more indulgent than any earthly parent could be, would certainly never fail to hear them. *Chriſt* often preached againſt covetouſneſs, or the folly and wickedneſs of men placing their happineſs in worldly poſſeſſions; he inveighed ſtrongly againſt hypocriſy, and falſeneſs of heart; recommended meekneſs, ſobriety, and modeſty; enjoined love, not only among relations, but betwixt all mankind one to another; who ſhould

be charitable, compaſſionate; neither envying one for the goods he poſſeſſed, nor refuſing to help him with thoſe he ſtood in need of; pride, paſſion, and ill-nature, he commanded all his followers to renounce; admitting none among them, but ſuch as were peace-makers, meek in ſpirit, patient, gentle, and of a tender diſpoſition: in a word, the end of the Chriſtian doctrine is this, to root out every vice, to which the human nature is liable, and to plant in their ſtead, every virtue; and he that can boaſt himſelf really and truly a Chriſtian, only waits for the diſſolution of his mortal body, to become one with the eternal and incorruptible angels; ſo pure will he be in ſpirit, and ſo void of offence, both towards God and man.

3. I ſhall now give you one inſtance more, of the great regard and care which Chriſt always expreſſed for children. Going over the river *Jordan*, and being followed by a vaſt multitude, whom he both taught, and healed of ſeveral diſeaſes which were among them, ſome obſerving his great readineſs to do good, brought ſome little boys and girls with them, in order to partake of his divine bleſſing; but the diſciples thinking it below the dignity of their maſter, to be diſturbed with infants, at firſt refuſed admittance to thoſe that brought them; 'till *Jeſus* having reproved them for ſo doing, and withal recommended the innocence and

and ſimplicity of theſe babes, as a pattern for their imitation, commanded them all to be introduced, and taking them up in his arms, he laid his hands upon them, and bleſſed them, and ſo departed from the place where this tranſaction happened.

4. Our Saviour being now in *Perga*, received a meſſage out of *Judea*, from his two friends, *Martha* and *Mary*, of the dangerous ſickneſs of a brother of theirs, named *Lazarus*, a perſon highly beloved and eſteemed by him; but he propoſing, on this occaſion, to manifeſt the glory of GOD, as well as his own Divine power, by a greater miracle than a ſimple cure, delayed his going 'till *Lazarus* was dead, and then ſet forward.

By the time that our LORD arrived at *Bethany*, *Lazarus* had been buried four days, and ſeveral friends, and others from *Jeruſalem*, were come to condole with *Martha* and *Mary*, for the great loſs they had ſuſtained; when on the news of Chriſt's arrival, they all came out of the houſe, but in particular the two ſiſters lamenting grievouſly, and falling at our LORD's feet, wiſhed over and over again, that he had come a little ſooner, for then they ſaid they were ſure *Lazarus* would not have died; the ſight of their tears and ſorrows affected the Son of GOD; and then demanding where they had laid the body, he followed them to the place, even weeping as they did; which made ſome of the compa-

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ny wonder, conſidering how well he had loved the deceaſed, that he had not prevented his death; but they were all ſoon convinced of their error, when coming to the burial place, Chriſt ordered the ſtone to be removed from the mouth, and after a ſhort prayer, going towards it, he cried with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth*; whereupon he that was dead, immediately aroſe from the place where he lay, and in ſuch ſound health, that when the grave cloaths were unlooſed, he was able to walk along with them to *Bethany*.

CHAP. VI.

Of our Saviour's miracles.

IT is the character given to Chriſt, by St. *Luke*, in his acts of the Apoſtles, that *he was a man approved of God, by miracles, wonders, and ſigns, which God did by him, in the midſt of all the people*. And indeed theſe miracles were an undoubted evidence of his being not only the immediate meſſenger of GOD, but even GOD himſelf; who by a touch, a look, a word ſpeaking, could command all the operations of nature, even contrary to their uſual courſe: for who but GOD, could cure the ſick, heal the leprous, give ſight to the blind, ſtrength to the lame, and raiſe the dead, even as the very ene-

enemies of our holy religion confeſs Chriſt did; but wickedly aſcribe it to the devil; whereas we know the devil can have no ſuch power, nor if he had, would he employ it in doing good; however, it is of great conſequence to the credit of chriſtianity, that the *Jews* never attempted to deny Chriſt's performing miracles; and in order to let you ſee the extent and nature of them, I ſhall here ſubjoin a catalogue of the moſt remarkable not already taken notice of; I ſay the moſt remarkable, becauſe, as the apoſtle very juſtly aſſerts, were all his miracles ſet down, even the world itſelf would not be large enough to contain the number of books, which muſt be employed to write them in.

1. Being at a marriage-feaſt in the city of *Cana* n, *Galilee*, where the wine ran ſhort; he, at the requeſt of his virgin-mother, turned a great quantity of water into wine, which was remarkable for the excellence of its flavour.

2. He cured the ſon of a great officer belonging to the court, only by ſpeaking a word when he was at a great diſtance from the child; who being convinced thereby of our LORD's divinity, with his whole family was converted to the faith.

3. In his progreſs thro' *Galilee*, he met with a man overſpread with a foul leproſy, whom upon his humble petition, with one touch, he immediately healed.

4. On the ſouth-eaſt ſide of *Jeruſalem*, there was a famous pool, and an hoſpital called *Betheſda*, in which

which lay a great multitude of poor diſeaſed people, waiting for an angel, who at certain times came from heaven, and putting the pool into a fermentation, conveyed ſuch virtue into it, that the firſt perſon who entered afterwards, was immediately cured of whatever diſtemper he or ſhe laboured under. On the ſabbath-day, our Saviour came to this place, and ſeeing a poor *paralytick*, who had been afflicted for upwards of thirty years, and had long lain there, in hopes of being cured, but in vain, becauſe he had no body to help him in, he healed him directly, ordering him to take up his bed and walk home; but while he was doing this, the *Jews* exclaimed againſt him, for carrying a burthen on the ſabbath-day which was unlawful; and as ſoon as they found that Jeſus Chriſt had been the perſon who cured him, and had bid him do it, they inſtantly ſeized him, and brought him before the council as an open profaner of the ſabbath; but Jeſus ſhewed them their hypocriſy, and that the ſabbath was made for man, not man for the ſabbath; however, we muſt be extremely cautious, how we conſider Chriſt as a favourer of taking any unwarrantable liberties with that holy ſeaſon ſet apart by GOD himſelf, for reſt and piety. And we ſhall find that Chriſt never employed himſelf on it in any thing but in doing good actions, which we are never to miſs an opportunity of.

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5. On his arrival at the gates of a ſtrange city, he reſtored to life a widow's only ſon, as the people were carrying him out to his funeral; to the great joy and comfort of the parent, and the no leſs aſtoniſhment of the ſpectators, who upon this occaſion glorified GOD; and publickly declared, that *a great and mighty prophet, was ſprung up among them, and that God had viſited his people.*

6. While Chriſt was on a voyage, being aſleep in the ſtern of the ſhip, there aroſe a moſt terrible ſtorm, ſo that his diſciples awoke him, fearing every minute that they ſhould be ſwallowed up; but when he aroſe, on his rebuking the waves, they obeyed his command, and immediately there was a dead calm, to the no ſmall ſurprize of every one that ſaw it.

7. After this he diſpoſſeſſed a man of a whole legion of devils, which he permitted to enter into a herd of ſwine.

8. A woman, by ſtealth, only touching the ſkirts of his coat, was cured of a foul diſeaſe, under which ſhe had laboured many years.

9. He raiſed the daughter of one *Jairus* from the dead, and reſtored her to her parents.

10. At *Bethſaida*, when a blind man was preſented him for cure, he took him out of the gates of the city, and then anointing his eyes with ſpittle, and laying his hands upon him, the man was reſtored to ſight.

Theſe and an innumerable multitude of the like wonders,

wonders, did our Lord and Saviour Christ perform among the *Jews*; and yet they would not believe in him; but at last condemned him to the most painful and ignominious death; but it was for our good: by his suffering we are healed; by his death we live to all eternity; and to give you a due sense of your great obligations to such an excellent Redeemer, I shall now lay before you this glorious, though melancholy scene; shewing you the eternal and all-powerful GOD, submitting to the most shocking pains and indignities, for the sake of his creatures; well might the prophet ask in the person of Christ, whether *ever sorrow was like to his sorrow.*

CHAP. VII.

1. *Christ enters Jerusalem in triumph.* 2. *The Jews lay snares for him.* 3. *His words and actions at Bethany.* 4. *The last supper.* 5. *Judas betrays him.*

1. OUR blessed Lord and Saviour having restored his dear friend *Lazarus* to life, in the manner already related, was now within a short walk of the city of *Jerusalem:* however, he did not repair thither 'till next morning, when he set out from *Marthas's*

Martha's houſe, attended by a great number of people; but being come to the mount of Olives, there he ſtopt, and diſpatching two of his diſciples to a neighbouring village, he ordered them to bring from thence, an aſs, and a colt which was not yet backed; that he might fulfil a remarkable prophecy, by riding into *Jeruſalem* upon them; the diſciples obeyed; and having mounted their maſter on the colt, he proceeded towards the city, amidſt the acclamations of an innumerable multitude, whilſt crowds of people came forth to meet him with branches of palm-trees in their hands, ſome ſpreading their garments in the way, and all crying *Hoſanna, to the Son of* David! *bleſſed is he, that cometh in the name of the Lord.*

2. Upon Chriſt's entring into *Jeruſalem* in this triumphant manner, the chief prieſts, and the other members of the *Jewiſh* council, grew very uneaſy; they heard every body, even the little babes in their mothers arms, proclaiming him the Son of GOD; nor did our Saviour forbid them; nor deny his being what they called him; ſo that they now thought there was an abſolute neceſſity for taking him off; but how to contrive it was the matter, for our bleſſed LORD was highly admired and reſpected by the populace, they therefore laid ſnares to ruin him; one of which was, that the *Phariſees* ſent ſome to aſk him, if it was lawful to pay tribute or not to *Cæſar?* If he ſaid

ſaid it was, they thought the multitude would then deſert him, as a betrayer of the liberties of his country; if he ſaid it was not, they might then accuſe him as an enemy to the *Roman* emperor; but our LORD baffled all their treacherous deſign by this notable anſwer; *Render unto* Cæſar *the things which are* Cæſar's; *and to God, the things which are God's.* Thus for a time did Chriſt diſappoint the malice of his enemies.

3. It was now the great *Jewiſh* feaſt of paſſover, and at the cloſe of each day, Chriſt conſtantly returned to the houſe of *Martha*, at *Bethany*, where he ſlept; it was here he foretold the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, exactly as it happened about forty years after his reſurrection; as alſo his own coming in glory at the laſt day; and being one night at ſupper with one *Simon*, a man whom he had formerly cured of a leproſy, *Mary Magdalene*, to ſhew her great love and value for him, came, and out of an alabaſter viol, poured a large quantity of ſuch rich ointment upon his head, as filled the whole houſe with the fragrant ſmell: this ſeeming prodigality diſpleaſed the apoſtles, but particularly the traitor *Judas* blamed her: however, Chriſt received *Mary*'s bounty with great gratitude, and did much honour to her for it.

This was the very night he returned from *Jeruſalem*; and the next day he remained intirely at *Bethany*, in the evening he and his apoſtles ſupped at *Mar-*

Martha's houſe; and while they were at table, conſidering that his time was now ſhort, he was minded to give them a teſtimony of his love; and from his own example, teach them two virtues, which, of all others, were more eſpecially requiſite to Chriſtians, humility and charity; to this purpoſe, riſing from table, he waſhed every one of their feet; now, *Peter* at firſt refuſed to admit of ſuch a ſervile office, from his heavenly maſter; but when Chriſt urged to him the expediency of what he did, the apoſtle acquieſced.

Soon after this, reflecting with himſelf, how well he had loved theſe his diſciples; he was not a little concerned, that any of them ſhould prove ſo ungrateful as to betray him: he then declared that ſuch a thing ſhould happen; and on *John*'s requeſt told him the perſon, *Judas Iſcariot*; to whom he gave a ſop, as he told *John* he would; and when he had ſo done, he *bad him go about what he had to do with all expedition*; the reſt of the apoſtles, who were ignorant of what Chriſt had ſaid to his favourite, thought our LORD ſpoke to *Judas* of ſome other matter; however, as ſoon as ſupper was ended, the traytor made off to *Jeruſalem*; where he agreed with the council to betray his maſter into their hands, during the abſence of the multitude, for thirty pieces of ſilver, about four pounds ſterling, of our preſent money.

5. In the mean time, our Saviour remained comfort-

ing and heartening the reſt of his apoſtles; who, at the thoughts of their beloved LORD's ſuffering, which he now told them plainly he muſt do, were grown exceedingly troubled, and diſpirited; but he aſſured them, that his death was for their good; and not only ſo, but for the ſalvation of all mankind; he added too, that he ſhould certainly riſe again the third day; but this they did not clearly underſtand.

The actual day of celebrating the paſſover being now arrived, our Saviour (his apoſtles, by his direction, having prepared every thing accordingly beforehand) on the evening went to *Jeruſalem*, where, after the uſual ceremonies upon that ſolemn occaſion were over, and they were all ſtanding round the table, on which they had juſt eaten the paſchal lamb, our LORD proceeded to the inſtitution of a ceremony, in commemoration of his own death and paſſion; for he took bread, and when he had bleſſed it, and brake it, he diſtributed it to his diſciples, calling it *his body*; and after he had ſo done, he took the cup of wine; and having in the like manner bleſſed it, he gave it among them, calling it *his blood of the new covenant*; and commanded them to do the ſame, that is, to eat bread, and drink wine, in this ſacramental manner, to the end of the world, in remembrance of him.

After this our LORD had much edifying diſcourſe, with his eleven apoſtles, (for

(for the wicked *Judas* had gone upon his helliſh errand ſome time before) and among other things telling them, they would very ſhortly undergo a ſevere tryal; *Peter* declared, that he was not only ready to go with him to priſon, but even to death; but our Saviour, who beſt knew his weakneſs, gave him to underſtand, that before the crowing of the cock, he ſhould deny him three times; upon which, giving them a final exhortation, and joining with them in prayer and a ſolemn hymn, he left the city, and paſſing over the brook *Cedron*, came to a garden well known to *Judas*, becauſe thither our LORD and his apoſtles uſed frequently to retire to their devotions.

6. In this place, laying his Godhead wholly aſide for the preſent, he underwent the moſt grievous ſufferings; the ſweat rolled off from him like great drops of blood; and the devil muſtered all his infernal powers, to deter him from the ſalvation of man. Here he took *James*, *John*, and *Peter*, with him aſide; deſiring that they would join in prayer with him; but alas! they had ſcarce kneeled down, when they fell faſt aſleep; ſo that he was left without any comfort or aſſiſtance, (for he would not help himſelf) 'till an angel was diſpatched from heaven to ſtrengthen him; with this recruit he returned the third time to his apoſtles, (for he had been to waken, and caution them againſt letting

ſloth creep upon them twice before) but finding them ſtill in the ſame ſleepy condition, he told them, that they might now reſt as long as they pleaſed, for he had no longer any occaſion for their aſſiſtance; the words were ſcarcely out of his mouth when *Judas*, accompanied with a band of ſoldiers and officers, came to apprehend him, and the falſe traytor, according to an agreement between himſelf and thoſe he brought, ran up to our LORD, and kiſſed him; thereby directing them who they ſhould ſeize; upon which Chriſt was almoſt immediately forſaken by all his followers, and left to the mercileſs fury, of an enraged multitude.

CHAP. VIII.

1. *Chriſt is brought before the high-prieſt.* 2. *Peter denies Chriſt.* 3. *Chriſt is examined by Pilate.* 4. *The cruel treatment he meets with from the Jews.* 5. *They crucify him.*

THE ſoldiers having bound our LORD's hands, hurried him immediately out of the garden; and as ſoon as they came over to the city of *Jeruſalem*, brought him to the palace of the then high-prieſt, called *Caiaphas*; where ſeveral of the principal members were ſitting in council, and *Peter* went into the palace after our LORD, (but at ſome diſ-

diſtance) being willing to ſee the iſſue of ſo ſtrange an event; and being entered into the great hall, he ſat down to warm himſelf at the fire, among the officers and ſervants.

The high-prieſt and his confederates, as we may imagine, were not unprepared for Chriſt's arrival; and accordingly, though ſo late at night, ſuch was their thirſt for his blood, that they began to try him, the very moment they got him in their power; for which purpoſe, they had procured a number of falſe witneſſes; but they prevaricated ſo notoriouſly in what they alledged againſt him, and diſagreed ſo ſhamefully with one another, that even thoſe judges, corrupt as they were, could not have the face to condemn any one on their evidence: they were obliged therefore, to have recourſe to Chriſt, and try whether they could not bring him to condemn himſelf; then the high-prieſt ſtanding up, *adjured him by the living God, to tell whether he was the Meſſiah, the Son of God.* Our LORD knew well enough, what would be the conſequence of his giving a direct anſwer to that queſtion, and the high-prieſt's deſign in putting it to him; but as he ſuffered himſelf to be brought there with no other intent, than that he might fall a ſacrifice, he gave them all the ſatisfaction they could wiſh, by immediately anſwering in the affirmative, *that he was:* but with all, that, though he was then before them as a criminal, they ſhould hereafter *behold, him*

ſitting on the right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven. The high-prieſt upon this fell into a violent paſſion, called him a blaſphemer, and ſaid, there was no occaſion for any thing farther againſt him; what he had now ſaid, was enough to juſtify their paſſing ſentence of death; and all the reſt of the council agreeing, the people who ſtood round, immediately began to treat him in the moſt ignominious and barbarous manner: ſpitting in his face, ſtriking and making game of him; all which he bore without ſo much as returning the ſmalleſt reproach; he knew he appeared in our ſtead; we were guilty, and for our ſins he ſuffered.

2. But let us ſee what *Peter* was doing, while his maſter was thus ſuffering for the ſins of all mankind. You may remember, that on his confidence, in proteſting his fidelity to Chriſt, our LORD reproved, and told him, that ere the cock crew twice, he ſhould deny him thrice.

Now one of the maid-ſervants belonging to the high-prieſt's family, coming into the hall and ſeeing *Peter*, taxed him with being one of Chriſt's diſciples: but he firmly denied it; and to another who met him without in the porch, ſhortly after, even affirmed with an oath, that he knew nothing of Jeſus. Nay, at laſt, when a third perſon, (one who had actually, not only ſeen him in the garden with Chriſt, but even had received a hurt from him, in attempting to lay hold on his maſter) affirmed

affirmed poſitively that he remembered his face, and he was certainly one of Chriſt's followers; he curſed and ſwore, that he was an entire ſtranger to him, upon which the cock crew; and *Peter* immediately calling to mind the words of our LORD, went out and wept bitterly, for having been ſo wicked and ſo weak, as to deny his beſt and only friend, his king and his GOD, in his adverſity.

3. The chief prieſts and elders, though they were ſole judges in religious matters, had little or no authority in ſecular affairs, that being lodged entirely in the hands of a governor, ſent by the *Roman* emperor to *Judea*. The man who bore this office at the time of our LORD's ſuffering, was *Pontius Pilate*, and to him was Jeſus ſent, as ſoon as it was light in the morning, in order that the ſentence already paſſed upon him, might be ratified, and put into execution.

Now it being a holy ſeaſon at *Jeruſalem*, when thoſe people who brought Jeſus came to *Pilate*'s palace, they refuſed to go into the hall, where he uſually paſſed ſentence of death upon criminals, counting it a defilement; the governor therefore came out to them, and ſeeing Chriſt bound and led like a malefactor, he demanded what crime he had committed; upon which they alledged againſt him, his aſſuming the title of king, as an injury done to the majeſty of *Cæſar*. However, *Pilate* could not be brought to condemn him, there being in fact no

proof at all againſt him; and hearing that *Herod* was at that time in *Jeruſalem*, (*Herod Antipas*, who had put *John the Baptiſt* to death) he ſent Chriſt to him, as it were in compliment. But *Herod* being much diſappointed, our Saviour not condeſcending to gratify his curioſity either by word or action, returned him back, after having treated him ignominiouſly, and dreſſed him in an antick garment.

This ſerved to convince *Pilate* yet more of his innocence, and being very unwilling to condemn him, and it being a cuſtom always to releaſe one malefactor or other, at the preſent feaſt, *Pilate* went out to the *Jews*, who now grew very clamorous for our Saviour's death, and told them, that as he could ſee nothing worthy of puniſhment in the juſt perſon whom they had brought before him, he would if they pleaſed, releaſe him in compliance with the uſual cuſtom. But this offer they rejected, calling out to have Jeſus crucified, and one *Barabbas* a murderer and a robber ſet free. Upon which, *Pilate* returning into the hall where he had left our bleſſed and ſpotleſs LORD, he was extremely perplexed and troubled, making no doubt that Chriſt was an extraordinary perſon; and theſe perplexities were ſtill farther increaſed, by a meſſage which he juſt then received from his wife, *upon no account to be acceſſary to the death of that juſt man: ſhe having ſuffered many things in a dream, becauſe of him.*

But

But the *Jews* ſtill perſiſting in their diabolical reſolution, to proſecute the eternal GOD to the croſs, *Pilate* took water, and waſhing his hands before the multitude, deſired them all to bear witneſs, that he was innocent of the blood of that excellent man; *then anſwered all the people, and ſaid, His blood be upon us and upon our children.* Which curſe has ſtuck to them in a very extraordinary and viſible manner even to this day.

4. The *Jews* were now appeaſed, and exulted, poor unhappy creatures, in their own miſery; for *Barabbas* the murderer, the robber, and the ſeditious villain, was delivered from his chains; and Jeſus, the LORD of life, the hope of ſalvation, the all merciful and omnipotent LORD, was condemned to an ignominious and painful death; nor did they think that ſufficient, they muſt add contempt to his other ſufferings; and after having whipt him till his ſacred fleſh was all over wounds, and gaſhes, every one of which ſent forth a ſtream of blood, they in mockery put a purple robe upon him, the enſign of royalty, and crowning him with thorns, and putting a reed in his hand by way of a ſcepter, they ſaluted him in deriſion, *king of the Jews:* then they ſpit upon him, and ſtruck him upon the head with the reed, ſo that the ſharp thorns pierced him to the very bone, and covered his face with a ſtream of blood. While this Lamb of GOD (in the words of the prophet) *was dumb like a ſheep before his ſhearers,*

ſhearers, and though he might have ſtruck all his perſecutors dead, with a word, opened not his mouth. Oh my dear children! conſider what you now read, and ſure it muſt touch your tender hearts; imagine but your bleſſed Saviour, in this condition, and all for your ſakes; and ſure it muſt make you weep, and reſolve, by leading a good life, in ſome meaſure to reward him for all thoſe pains and indignities: but the greateſt of all, is yet to come; for the wicked and abominable *Jews* now prepared to crucify him.

5. There was a place near the city of *Jeruſalem*, called *Golgotha*, or the place of a ſcull; to this they dragged him, amidſt a noiſy multitude; many of whom wept, but more reviled him; among our Saviour's friends, that attended upon this melancholy occaſion, were his bleſſed mother the Virgin *Mary*, another *Mary*, the wife of one *Cleophas*, *Mary Magdalene*, and *John* the beloved diſciple of our LORD. Theſe never left him 'till he expired, and the *Jews* meeting one *Simon* of *Cyrene* in their way, obliged him to bear the croſs to the place of execution; the weight of it being ſo great, that Chriſt ſunk under it.

Crucifixion was not only the moſt ſcandalous, but the moſt painful death that could poſſibly be inflicted upon any one; nor will you wonder at this, when you hear the manner of it. The figure of a croſs you have often ſeen: it was a ſtrait piece of wood

of

of a conſiderable length, with another piece of wood which run athwart, pretty near the top of it; on this the perſon to ſuffer, was laid ſtark naked, and his feet with two ſharp nails having been fixed to the trunk part, his hands were afterwards extended, and nailed at the two extremities of the upper piece of wood, and thus the poor wretch was raiſed upon it, in inexpreſſible torment, a mark for every one's obſervation; and ſuch was the puniſhment with which the *Jews* thought proper to reward the Saviour of the world, for the offer of eternal life which he made them.

The *Jews* had already preferred a murderer and a robber before Jeſus, and at his execution, according to the words of an ancient prophecy concerning him, *they numbered him with the tranſgreſſors.* St. *Matthew* informs us, that our LORD was crucified between two thieves; but when he was hung upon the croſs, there was an accuſation placed over his head by the command of *Pilate*, and in the governor's own hand writing, the words of which were, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. A proceeding very diſagreeable to thoſe people, who cavilled at the terms, ſaying that it ſhould have been, *who ſaid he was king of the Jews.* However, *Pilate* would make no alteration in it for them.

Is it not enough to make the heart of any one break with ſorrow, to think of what horrid torments Chriſt muſt have undergone, during this dreadful interval; and

and how cruel and hard hearted muſt theſe monſters have been, who had the wickedneſs to condemn him to them; and not condemn him only, but while he was ſuffering, to look on him, to wag their heads, laugh, and make a joke, deſiring *if he was the Son of God, that he would come down from the croſs.* Nay one of the very thieves that were crucified with him, his very fellow-ſufferer, reviled and abuſed him; but the other, GOD was pleaſed to viſit with his grace, even in that very moment of his ſhame and agony, and letting the light of his Divine mercy in upon his ſoul, he acknowledged Chriſt to be the Son of GOD, and humbly beſought him to remember him when he came to his kingdom; to which Chriſt, ever ready to accept the penitent, anſwered with a promiſe of his favour; but well might he do that, when he even prayed for his very executioners; and while they were aggravating his miſery by every means they could think of, cried out, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

1. *The miracles attending Chriſt's death.* 2. *His burial.* 3. *His reſurrection.* 4. *His appearance to his apoſtles.* 5. *His aſcenſion into Heaven.*

1. DURING the life of our bleſſed LORD and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, he performed ſuch miracles in order to ſupport his character of the Son of GOD, as muſt have fixed the belief of any people, leſs blind, deaf, and ſtubborn, than the children of *Iſrael*. But he was determined to give one laſt trial more, before he left them for ever. Accordingly he was no ſooner hung on the croſs in the painful manner already related, than a total darkneſs inſtantly overſpread the whole land of *Judea*, which laſted (during the remainder part of his ſufferings) upwards of three hours: yet the *Jews* ſtill remained in their former infidelity; nay, they rather grew worſe and worſe; and near the cloſe of our Lord's pangs, when he was thirſty, and called for drink, in a wanton barbarity they dipt a ſpunge in vinegar, and fixing it on a reed, put it up to his mouth; but here their malice was prevented, for the diſmal tragedy being now at an end, and every prophecy relating to the *Meſſiah* fulfilled, even to the minuteſt particular, in the perſon of our Saviour, inſtead

inſtead of taſting their odious draught, he turned his head from it, and crying with a loud voice, *it is finiſhed*, died that inſtant. But obſerve what followed, the breath was no ſooner out of his body, than nature was convulſed, as if ſhe herſelf had ſuffered: there was the moſt ſhocking and dreadful earthquake that ever was; rocks were rent in pieces; and in order to ſtamp a particular mark of horror on the *Jews*, the inward wall of the temple of *Jeruſalem* was ſplit from the top to the bottom. Nay, the very graves were opened, and ſeveral ſaints and prophets, who had long lain buried in the earth, appeared to many in the ſtreets. And this indeed had the natural effect upon a few, who ſtanding round the croſs, and ſeeing all theſe prodigies about, with the ſacred martyr upon it, lifted up their eyes to heaven, and declared of a truth, that Jeſus was the Son of GOD.

2. The day after this tranſaction, was the *Jewiſh* ſabbath, on the eve of which, it was unlawful for them to ſuffer any ſuch ſpectacles as crucified malefactors to be expoſed; the chief prieſts therefore came to *Pilate*, who in compliance with their requeſt, ordered the legs of the criminals to be broken, and their bodies taken down; and in this there is ſomething remarkable, for the death of the croſs was very lingering, and indeed the thieves who were hung up at the ſame time with our Saviour, were yet as much alive as ever. It was to diſpatch them there-

fore

fore that the additional puniſhment of breaking their legs was added; but when the executioners came to our bleſſed LORD, they broke not his legs, becauſe to their great ſurprize, they found him dead already; which had not his life or death been abſolutely dependent on himſelf, it was next to an impoſſibility, he ſhould have been. However, a centurion ran his ſpear into our LORD's ſide, after which, his body was begged of the *Roman* governor, by *Joſeph* of *Arimathea*, a rich man, who embalming it with many precious ſpices, and wrapping it up in fine linen cloth, laid it in a new ſepulchre, which he had in a neighbouring garden, and where never man had been laid.

3. Now the *Jews*, whoſe envy even death could not conquer, ſeeing this, came alſo to the *Roman* governor, and telling him that the deceiver (ſo they called our bleſſed LORD GOD) had given out that he ſhould riſe from the dead on the third day. Now, ſaid they, we deſire that you will order a guard to watch his grave 'till that time be paſt, and not only ſo, but let us put a ſeal upon it, leſt his diſciples coming ſhould ſteal him away in the night, and afterwards give out, that he was riſen from the dead; *and the ſecond error be worſe than the firſt.* To all this *Pilate* conſented; but on the firſt day of the week, that is, the day after the *Jewiſh* ſabbath, when very early in the morning, even before it was yet day, *Mary Magdalene*, with another female diſciple of our LORD's, came

came to the ſepulchre, in order to indulge their melancholy: there was a violent earthquake, for juſt at the ſame time, an angel of GOD deſcended from heaven; and having rolled back the ſtone from the mouth of the cave, ſat upon it: he appeared like a blaze of fire, and the watch were ſo terrified, that they loſt all ſenſe and motion. The angel then ſpoke to the women, and told them he knew whom they ſought, Jeſus who was crucified, but he was not there, but riſen from the dead. Now the guards had by this time ſufficiently recovered themſelves, to leave their poſt, and running to the city, they told the chief prieſts all that had happened. Upon which the council gave them a large ſum of money, and deſiring them to tell the people, that while they ſlept, his diſciples had ſtolen Chriſt away; this whole matter was huſhed, ſo as to make that falſe report paſs current among the *Jews* for many years after. But the evidence of Chriſt's reſurrection was a matter of too much importance, not to be put beyond all doubt or controverſy, among his diſciples, who were afterwards to bear teſtimony of it.

5. Chriſt ſhewed himſelf not once, but ſeveral times to his friends and diſciples, after his reſurrection from the dead, and firſt to *Mary Magdalene*; which St. *John* gives us an account of, as follows, that being come to the ſepulchre, as I have already related to you, and finding the body of Chriſt gone from the place where ſhe

ſhe had ſeen it laid; after bewailing the loſs, ſhe turned herſelf back and ſaw Jeſus ſtanding by her; but ſhe taking him for the gardener, (for ſhe knew him not at firſt) began immediately to make enquiries for the corps of her deceaſed Lord; uponwhich Jeſus ſaid unto her, *Mary!* upon that her eyes were immediately opened, but he would not ſuffer her to touch him, becauſe, as he ſaid, *he had not yet aſcended to the Father.* This *Mary* told his diſciples, but they would not give her credit. The ſame evening therefore, when a number were gathered together, and all the doors cloſe ſhut for fear of the *Jews*, Chriſt came in among them, ſhewed them the marks in his hands and feet, ſtaid ſome time with them, and then departed. But there was ſtill one of his principal diſciples to be convinced, *Thomas* ſirnamed *Didymus*, who not being by at the time of our Saviour's appearance, thought it was a thing ſo contrary to probability, that he would not believe without the evidence of his own ſeneſs, and this he had. For eight days after, when all the diſciples were again aſſembled, and *Thomas* among the reſt, Chriſt came in the ſame manner as formerly, and ſhewing himſelf to *Thomas*, who inſtantly acknowledged and adored him, he rebuked his want of faith, ſaying, *Bleſſed were they that had not ſeen, and yet believed.*

6. Our Saviour ſhewed himſelf a third time to his diſciples, at the ſea of *Tiberias*: and at this place

he thought fit to manifeſt himſelf firſt by a miracle. They had been fiſhing all night but caught nothing; and in the morning Chriſt ſtood upon the ſhore near them, and enquiring after their ſucceſs, he deſired that they would caſt their net on the right ſide, and they ſhould find ſome.

And even as he told them, they incloſed ſuch a multitude, that they could hardly draw their net to land. Upon this *Peter* immediately knew it muſt be their maſter, and girding his coat about him, he ſwam to ſhore. Here Chriſt dined with his diſciples, and this was the laſt time of his honouring them with his preſence upon earth: for after having recommended the care of preaching the goſpel, to them in a very particular manner; and promiſed them the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, he was received by a bright cloud, and taken bodily up into heaven before their eyes, where he is to remain, at the right hand of GOD, 'till at the laſt day, he comes in glory to judge both the quick and the dead.

And according to the promiſe of our LORD, at the next feaſt of Pentecoſt, (the ſame with our Whitſuntide) while the twelve apoſtles were gathered together, they received the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, which was beſtowed upon them in a violent tempeſt, that roſe all of a ſudden, as if it would ſhake the houſe in which they were aſſembled, to the ground; and at the ſame time the room was filled with clo-

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ven tongues, as they appeared, of fire, which ſat upon each. Now the apoſtles were all mean and illiterate men; but after this they immediately began to ſpeak in all languages, to the wonder and amazement of every body; ſo that the fame of this tranſaction went through all the country, and many thouſands became profeſſors of the Chriſtian faith.

CHAP. X. *St. Matthew the Evangeliſt.*

OF the *Evangeliſts*, or as I have already explained the word, thoſe of our Saviour's apoſtles, who writ his life in the Goſpel, St. *Matthew* is the firſt: his ſirname was *Levi*, and his profeſſion of all others, the moſt infamous among the *Jews*, he being a *publican*, or one of thoſe *Hebrews* who undertook the office of *tax-gatherer* to the *Roman emperor*. St. *Matthew* was ſitting at the *receipt of cuſtom*, when our Lord thought proper to call him, and immediately getting up, he left the place and followed him. After Chriſt's aſcenſion, this apoſtle, for the firſt eight years, preached up and down *Judea*; and when he betook himſelf to the *Heathens*, *Ethopia* is generally aſſigned as the province of his *apoſtolical* miniſtry, where by his excellent doctrine, and the miracles he performed, he triumphed greatly over ignorance and idolatry: in this country it is moſt probable he ſuffered *martyrdom*, but by what kind of death is altogether uncertain.

CHAP. XI. *St. Mark the Evangeliſt.*

SAINT *Mark* was a *Jew* of the tribe of *Levi*; he was not one of the twelve *apoſtles*, but converted probably by St. *Peter*, to whom he was a conſtant companion in all his travels, ſupplying the place of a ſcribe and interpreter. It was by this *apoſtle* that he was ſent into *Egypt*, where he fixed his reſidence in the city of *Alexandria* and places adjacent; the ſucceſs of his labours was ſo great, that he converted numbers both of men and women. And going farther weſt towards *Lybia*, notwithſtanding the barbarity of the inhabitants he planted the *Goſpel* among them, and firmly fixed their belief of it. However, after this coming back to *Alexandria*, it was there he ſuffered *martyrdom*. For the *Egyptian idolaters*, thinking St. *Mark*'s doctrine a diſhonour to their darling *idol*, they broke thro' the aſſembly where he was celebrating divine ſervice, and binding his feet with cords, dragged him thro' the ſtreets, and thruſt him into priſon, where in the night he was comforted with a divine viſion. Next day the enraged people renewed the tragedy, and uſed him in the ſame barbarous manner, dragging him thro' the ſtreets by the feet, 'till all the fleſh being raked off, and his blood run out, his ſpirits failed, and he expired.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII. *St. Luke the Evangeliſt.*

THE place of St. *Luke*'s nativity was *Antioch*, the *metropolis* of that rich and beautiful country *Syria*. In which city the diſciples of Jeſus, were firſt honoured with the name of *Chriſtians*. He was a *phyſician*, and famous alſo for *painting*. However he, no more than St. *Mark*, was of the number of *Apoſtles*, being as is generally ſuppoſed, converted by St. *Paul*, to whom he was an inſeparable companion, and fellow-labourer in the miniſtry of the *Goſpel*. However, ſome ſay he parted with St. *Paul* at *Rome*, and returning back into his own country travelled into *Egypt*, and took upon himſelf the biſhoprick of *Thebais*, a city there. Tho' it is more probable, that he never quitted St. *Paul*'till the death of that *apoſtle*, As to the time and manner of this evangeliſt's death, accounts are very various; ſome affirming him to die in *Egypt*, others in *Greece*; ſome in *Bithynia*, others at *Epheſus*; ſome make him die a natural, others a violent death. Among which the latter ſay, that being preaching in *Greece*, the infidels made head againſt him, and for want of a croſs, hung him upon an olive-tree, in the eighty fourth year of his age. His body now lies buried in *Conſtantinople*, whither it was removed by the command of *Conſtantine* the emperor, or his ſon *Conſtantius*.

CHAP. XIII. *St. John the Evangeliſt.*

THE next of our Saviour's apoſtles, of whoſe life and actions we can draw any knowledge from the Holy Scriptures, is St. *John*. Our Saviour's beloved diſciple, who of all the reſt ſeems to have been moſt ſtrongly attached to his ſacred perſon, having attended him conſtantly during the time of his miniſtry, nor left him even when the world forſook him at the time of his cruel paſſion; boldly owning him in the face of all the *Jews*, and taking his bleſſed mother home to his houſe, where after, the crucifixion of Chriſt, ſhe lived to the hour of her death. The *Virgin Mary*, indeed, was as it were a legacy bequeathed by our LORD to St. *John*. When on the croſs, turning to her, he deſired her *to behold her ſon*, meaning that apoſtle; and when we conſider the mild and angelick diſpoſition of St. *John*, our Saviour's diſtinction of him is the leſs to be wondered at.

After his reſurrection, Chriſt upon telling St. *Peter* what ſhould befal him in the courſe of his preaching the goſpel, with his manner of martyrdom, that apoſtle enquired what ſhould be the fate of St. *John*; to which our LORD anſwered, *what is that to thee? What if I have a mind that he ſhould tarry 'till I come:* now from a wrong underſtanding of this expreſſion, ſeveral imagined, that St. *John* was never to die at all. However, though

though we have not any warrant from ſcripture to ſay what became of him, as the Evangeliſt is very conciſe with regard to each of Chriſt's miniſters after his death; yet from his hiſtory there is no doubt, that after having lived to ſee the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, he died at the city of *Epheſus*, near a hundred years old, being the only one of his fellow-labourers who died a natural death; nor indeed, could he have eſcaped martyrdom, had it not been by the particular and moſt aſtoniſhing interpoſition of Providence; for he had once at *Rome*, by the command of that abominable emperor *Nero*, been thrown into a cauldron full of boiling oil, but came out of it again unhurt, even as *Shadrach*, *Meſhach*, and *Abednego*, eſcaped from *Nebuchadnezzar*'s burning fiery furnace.

CHAP. XIV. *St. PETER.*

THE Holy Jeſus being gone to heaven, the apoſtles began to act according to the power and commiſſion which they had received from him; among the numbers of thoſe about which the ſcripture hath been moſt explicit, I ſhall treat ſeparately, and firſt of St. *Peter*. After the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, we find him in the boldeſt and nobleſt manner, defending the doctrine of his eternal maſter, againſt

the falſeneſs and infidelity of the *Jews*. Nor did he fail to give them a proof of that power, which lodged in Chriſt, and he transferred to thoſe that believed in him; for going with St. *John* ſhortly after to evening prayer, he ſaw a poor cripple, who though above forty years old, had been from his birth lying at the beautiful gate of the temple, aſking an alms. *Peter* earneſtly looking upon him, told him that he had no money to give him, but of ſuch as he had he ſhould partake; when lifting him up by the hand, he commanded him in *the name of Jeſus to riſe up and walk*; the words were no ſooner ſpoken than the thing was done; but though *Peter* took occaſion from thence to convince many people of the divinity of that Jeſus, they had ſo lately crucified; yet he and *John* incurred the cenſure of the *Jewiſh* council by it, and were ſtrictly forbid exerciſing their apoſtolick function any more.

You have already had, in the courſe of this hiſtory, more than one example of the puniſhment which conſtantly waits upon the covetous and lying: but none can be more dreadful, than what befel *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, who were among the multitude of thoſe that profeſſed the chriſtian faith; and it being agreed that they ſhould have every thing in common, all the converts who had eſtates or houſes ſold them, and brought the money to the apoſtles, to be laid

laid out for the general good. The falſe *Ananias*, however, and his wicked wife, though they affected the good name, which would attend ſuch a charitable action, ſecreted part of the money which they had received for their goods, and aggravated their crime by denying it. But the lye was hardly out of their vile mouths, when they were both ſtruck dead, and fell at St. *Peter*'s feet, filling all that ſaw them with horror and amazement: and being a proper reproof to hypocriſy, ſtingineſs, lying, and worldlimindedneſs of all ſorts.

St. *Peter* after this, went about performing ſeveral miracles, ſuch as raiſing the dead, curing the ſick, healing the lame and blind, and diſpoſſeſſing devils. But no paſſage of his miniſtry is more eminent, than that one of his being thrown into priſon by *Herod Agrippa*, from whence he was delivered by an angel, who deſcending from heaven in the night, opened the priſon doors, and finding *Peter* aſleep (for ſuch is the bleſſing of a good conſcience, that even tho' the apoſtle lay upon the cold ſtones, he was faſt aſleep) raiſed him, knocked off his chains, bad him gird on his garments, and follow him. He did ſo, and having paſt through all the gates, which unlocked of themſelves, as they approached, 'till, to the great joy and wonder of all his friends, he got ſafe into *Mary*'s houſe, and from thence withdrew to a place of leſs danger.

St. *Peter*'s ſucceeding labours were for a long time

time confined to ſuch matter only, as more immediately related to the regulation of the Chriſtian Church; in which thro' the natural perverſeneſs of humanity, even in theſe early days, there had already riſen ſome hereſies and diſſenſions, 'till coming to *Rome*, he diſtinguiſhed himſelf and the ſuperiority of his power and doctrine, in a notable diſputation with *Simon Magus* a ſorcerer, whoſe impoſtures had deceived the whole city; but *Peter* not only ſoon convinced them of their error, but puniſhed the villain by a ſudden and publick death. Now as we cannot gather any thing farther of this apoſtle from the ſcripture. I ſhall here cloſe my account of him, only informing you, that in the end, he ſealed the firſt teſtimony to the truth of the Goſpel which he preached, with his blood. For he was crucified at *Rome*, but becauſe he thought it was too great an honour to ſuffer the ſame death which his GOD had before undergone, he, by his own requeſt, was hung on the croſs with his head downwards, and ſo changed this corrupt world, for the pure and eternal kingdom of heaven.

CHAP. XV. *St. PAUL.*

ST *Paul*, a *Jew* by birth, and by name alſo *Saul*, was one of the moſt violent enemies to the

the Chriſtian faith; impriſoning and abuſing the diſciples of our LORD, wherever he found them; nay, he had been once actually one of thoſe, who was aiding at the death of the firſt Chriſtian martyr, St. *Stephen*. However, this man was ſet apart by Chriſt, for a choſen veſſel to bear GOD's name before the heathens, and kings, and the children of *Iſrael*. Now his converſion was after this manner; while he was on his journey to the city of *Damaſcus* from *Jeruſalem*, where he went with full power, from the high-prieſt and *Jewiſh* council, to act againſt the Chriſtians; all on a ſudden, there ſhone round him a light from heaven, above the brightneſs of the ſun; whereat being greatly amazed, he and his companions fell to the ground, and a voice was heard ſaying, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me*. The voice then told *Saul*, that it came from Jeſus, whom he perſecuted, and deſired him to go to *Damaſcus*, and there he ſhould learn what was neceſſary to be done by him. *Saul*, upon riſing from the ground, found himſelf blind, and ſo he remained for three days, 'till being healed by *Ananias*, a diſciple of our LORD's, then at *Damaſcus*, who had been warned by a viſion, for that purpoſe: *Saul*, fully convinced of the divinity of Jeſus Chriſt, began to preach that goſpel, which he had before ſo often reviled and perſecuted, and with ſuch ſucceſs, that no oppoſers could ſtand againſt the force of his

his arguments. St. *Paul* being at *Paphos*, and fully endued with the gift of the Holy Ghoſt, there met with *Elymas* the ſorcerer; whom he ſtruck with blindneſs in the preſence of *Sergius Paulus* the governor. After which, *Paul* preached Chriſt at *Antioch*, but was forced to leave that place, by the wicked contrivance of his *Jewiſh* countrymen.

Paul, after this, in the name of the Lord, cauſed a ſpirit of divination to depart from a damſel poſſeſſed with it, whoſe maſters being uſed to make gain by her means, were ſo enraged at it, that they procured *Paul* and *Silas* to be beaten with many ſtripes, and thrown into priſon. At midnight, the jaylor having been alarmed with a great noiſe, and an earthquake, which had burſt open the priſon doors, imagined all his priſoners had eſcaped, and was going to make himſelf away: but *Paul*, calling out to him, aſſured him, they were all there, and ſo prevented his deſign. Whereupon the jaylor was converted to the faith of Chriſt, and he and his family were baptized, and *Paul* received great kindneſs from him, and was ſoon delivered from his confinement with honour.

After performing many miracles, and proſelyting great numbers to the Chriſtian religion, he was at laſt apprehended at *Jeruſalem* by the *Jews*, and would have been put to death, had it not been for the chief captain of the *Romans* in that city, who, finding the *Jews* implacably

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bly bent to deſtroy him, ſent him under a guard to *Cæſarea*, the reſidence of *Felix*, and chief *Roman* governor of *Judea*; who finding the *Jews* unable to prove any thing worthy of death againſt him, uſed him with lenity; and after certain days ſent for him, his wife *Druſilla*, a *Jeweſs*, being preſent, and heard him concerning the faith in Chriſt; and as he reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to come, *Felix* trembled, and anſwered, *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient ſeaſon, I will ſend for thee.* But after two years, *Portius Feſtus* ſucceeded *Felix*; and *Felix*, willing to ſhew the *Jews* a pleaſure, left *Paul* bound.

This great apoſtle had at laſt no other way left to eſcape the malice of the *Jews*, but by appealing to *Cæſar* himſelf: and being put in a ſhip, in order to be ſent to *Rome*, they were overtaken by a violent ſtorm, in which, having run the greateſt hazard, they were caſt in ſafety on the iſland of *Melita*, now called *Malta*. The people of the iſland ſhewed them great kindneſs in their diſtreſs, and made them a fire to warm them; but when St. *Paul* had gathered a bundle of ſticks, and laid them on the fire, a viper came out of the heat, and faſtened on his hand, which made the company conclude him to be an ill man; and that, tho' he eſcaped the ſhipwreck, vengeance ſuffered him not to live: but when they ſaw him ſhake off the viper into the fire, without receiving any harm,

harm, they changed their minds, and ſaid, he was a God. And he continued there three months, curing the ſick, and healing all manner of diſeaſes.

Indeed St. *Paul*, of all the apoſtles, appears to have been moſt indefatigable in the great work he had undertaken, travelling from Eaſt to Weſt all the world over, ſuffering ſevere ſcourgings, and impriſonment: nay, he was brought often to the very brink of death, both by ſea and land. Yet he was not diſcouraged, but rather grew bolder and ſtronger in the faith of Chriſt, *perſevering in the good fight, 'till he had finiſhed his courſe.*

He, like the other apoſtles, performed many miracles in confirmation of his divine miſſion, and at laſt ſuffered martyrdom, under *Nero* at *Rome*; in that general perſecution raiſed againſt the Chriſtians, under a pretence that they fired the city. Some of the antient writers affirm, that he incurred the diſpleaſure of that barbarous monſter, by joining with St. *Peter* in the deſtruction of *Simon Magus*; others, that by converting a favourite concubine of *Nero*'s he drew upon himſelf his deviliſh fury; be that as it will he was beheaded in the ſixty-eighth year of his age, leaving many valuable writings behind him, to the church; and bearing the title to all poſterity, of the particular apoſtle of the Gentiles; or thoſe converts to the Chriſtian faith, out of the *Jewiſh* covenant.

F I N I S.